



简易英汉对照读物

U F Os

6512/4 飞 碟

Lewis Jones 著

尹赛夫 译注

外语教学与研究出版社

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本书简介

飞碟是未辨明之飞行物体（UFO）的俗称。这是人们最感兴趣的话题之一，也是科学界最有争议的问题之一。

本书作者刘易斯·琼斯（Lewis Jones）搜集了飞碟目击者的报告和美国空军对飞碟的调查材料，系统地介绍了飞碟这一名称的由来、几次重大飞碟事件和多种有关飞碟的传闻。他用科学的态度和方法分析这些材料，还讲解了气球、摄影、电影、行星、人造卫星、等离子体等与飞碟有关的知识。

本书是一本较好的英语科学知识普及读物，语言简洁明快，内容很有趣味性和启发性，并附有照片和参考译文，可供高中学生和中等英语程度的读者阅读。

Contents

Saucers in the sky	1
Questions with no answers	2
Visitors from another world?	3
What Killed Captain Mantell?	5
A new word comes into English	8
Three great UFOs	10
Some answers	13
'Is this report true?'	17
UFOs in a man's eye	18
'What are they hiding?'	22
Some Knowns	23
The best-Known UFO of all	26
How big? How far? How fast?	30
Pictures or words?	32
Photographs of what?	34
Making UFOs	37
Do cameras tell the truth?	38
Pictures that move	40
A radio eye	44
The radar picture	47
The secret of the Foo Fighters	50
Plasma-UFOs	51
Space-visitors in the past?	53
Is somebody stealing ships?	54
Reporting the impossible	56

Zond Four	58
How to use Father Christmas	61
Identified Flying Objects	64
The two questions	65

目 录

空中的碟子	67
没有答案的问题	68
是外星人吗?	69
什么东西杀害了曼台尔上尉?	70
英语中出现一个新词	72
三个重大的UFO事件	74
一些答案	76
“这个报告真实吗?”	79
一个人眼中的UFO	80
“他们隐瞒什么?”	82
某些已经认出的东西	83
最著名的UFO	85
多大? 多远? 多快?	88
照片还是话?	89
什么东西的照片?	91
制造UFO	93
照相机能说明真相吗?	94
活动的照片	95
无线电眼睛	98
雷达图象	100
FOO式战斗机的秘密	102
等离子体——UFO	103
过去的外星人?	104
有人偷船吗?	105
报告不可能发生的事	106
探测者四号	108
怎样利用圣诞老人	110
已经辨明的飞行物体	112
两个问题	113

Saucers in the sky

On June 24, 1947, Kenneth Arnold was flying his plane above the Cascade Mountains of Washington, in the United States. He owned a company that sold things for firefighting, and he used his plane for carrying them.

At three o'clock in the afternoon he was near Mount Rainier. A plane was lost in the area, so Arnold flew round for a time and looked for it. He was looking down at the ground, when he noticed some lights away to his left.

There were nine of them in a line: the front one was highest, and the one at the back was lowest. Each object was round and shining, and almost as big as a plane. The objects all travelled in line together, and sometimes they flew in and out among the mountains. Once, they passed behind one of the mountain-tops.

Arnold noticed where they were at different times, and wrote it down. One question that interested him was: How fast were the objects flying? When he landed, he looked at his notes: 75 kilometres in 102 seconds. That meant the objects were travelling at 2700 kilometres an hour. That's what he told the newspapers later.

The newspapermen asked him: 'How were these objects moving?'

'Each one moved up and down as it travelled,' he

said, 'like a saucer when you throw it along the top of the water.'

This answer was taken up by most of his listeners. And next day newspapers all over the United States said Kenneth Arnold saw 'flying saucers' over the Cascade Mountains.

Arnold didn't say that at all. He talked of objects that *moved like* saucers thrown across water. He didn't say they *looked like* saucers. But it was too late to make changes. Flying saucers were in the news.

Questions with no answers

A few days later, in Nevada, someone else in a plane saw five or six round objects, away to his right. That same night, four Air Force officers in Alabama saw a strange light in the sky. As it travelled, it sometimes turned left, sometimes right. Sometimes it moved very fast, sometimes slower.

A woman saw ten of them shoot across the sky above her house. A driver in Iowa saw thirteen of them. In New Mexico several people in a car watched a strange light cross the whole sky in thirty seconds. In Chicago a woman saw one 'with legs'.

A policeman in Portland, Oregon, looked up one day and saw five large objects like saucers. They were travell-

ing very fast, and they seemed to be turning round and round as they went. A few minutes later, two other policemen noticed three of the same objects. Then some of the other people in Portland began to see them.

That night, the crew of a plane in Idaho saw five 'somethings'.

One morning, five Air Force men were sitting in a truck when four of them saw an unusual object in the sky. There were two pieces on top that seemed to turn slowly. The object made no sound. After about 90 seconds, the men lost it.

All this—and more —less than two weeks after Arnold's story.

When United States Air Force planes began to find their way into newspaper stories, the Air Force became troubled. It wasn't answering any more questions from newspapers: it just stopped talking. This made people feel uneasy.

Why was the Air Force saying nothing? What did it know? Why was it hiding things? Was the truth too fearful to tell?

Visitors from another world?

Maybe this uneasiness caused even more trouble. People began *trying* to see flying saucers. More people began looking

at the sky. They saw things they hadn't noticed before. Anything unusual *may* be a strange flying object, so more people telephoned their newspaper—and there were more flying saucer stories. And the Air Force were still not talking.

It's useful to understand their reasons. There had been other stories of strange flying objects since the war. More than a thousand of these stories came from Sweden in 1946 alone. Some people thought those objects were Russian—Sweden was a long way from the United States.

But here was something quite different—now unknown objects were flying across the United States itself.

'What's happening?' people wanted to know 'Do these objects come from Russia? Are they *safe*?'

At that time, Russia and the United States were not at all friendly. The Russians were building many new planes that could reach the USA. Maybe they had new bombs as well.

The USA was planning to send its U-2 plane high over Russian skies. Maybe the flying objects were Russian, doing the same kind of thing in the USA—looking, watching, learning. Perhaps an enemy was bringing a new kind of war to the skies over the USA. Were Kenneth Arnold's flying saucers part of that war?

These were the questions that troubled the United States government. It's not surprising that the Air Force stopped talking to newspapers.

But people were still asking questions. Kenneth Arnold (among others) was happy to give them answers. Like the newspapers, he too was soon talking of saucers that flew. He wrote a small book of fifteen pages—*The Flying Saucer as I saw it*. And to the question ‘Where do they come from?’ he had a clear answer: ‘From another world.’

A newspaperman who wrote about a saucer (Arnold said) died of unknown causes. A plane hit Mount Rainier and everyone in the plane was killed. This was *before* Arnold saw his flying objects, but still (he said) this had something to do with the saucers.

A bridge in Idaho was strangely set on fire by ‘something’. One saucer was able to get away because it knew the *thoughts* of the man who flew after it.

When the Air Force was asked, ‘Is all this true?’ they still had nothing to say. And that only made things worse.

People thought: ‘If all these stories are untrue, the government will just say so. But they’re not saying anything. Why not? The stories must be true.’

So there was the answer at last. Arnold must be right. The flying saucers must be visitors from another world.

What killed Captain Mantell?

‘Do you believe in flying saucers?’ At first, this

meant, 'Do you believe Kenneth Arnold?' Then—when other people saw unusual things—it meant, 'Are these things truly there in the sky? Or only in people's minds?'

But soon it meant something different: 'Do you believe these objects come from another world?'

The *believer* answered, 'Yes. We do have visitors, and they are not from our world.'

The *non-believers* answered, 'No. There must be some other cause.'

The believers couldn't give good reasons, and the non-believers couldn't think of good causes. But the believers seemed more sure of themselves—they certainly made the most noise. It was mostly the believers who telephoned the newspapers and wrote the books. But their story needed another chapter—an interesting one, something surprising.

A few months after Arnold's flight, they got one. It happened at an airport in Kentucky, on January 7, 1948.

That afternoon the airport got a telephone call from the police. Several people were phoning the police about a strange flying object.

'Can you identify it?' the police asked.

The airport said there were no flights in the area.

About twenty minutes later, the police called again. This time, people from two other towns were seeing the object.

They said it was round, about 90 metres across, and moving quite fast. The airport made some phone calls of its own, then called the police.

‘There are no planes in the area from *any* airport,’ they said. ‘There’s nothing.’

Then the people at the airport itself saw it. Several officers looked at it long and carefully through field-glasses, but they couldn’t identify it. At half-past two, everyone was wondering what to do about it, when four fighter-planes came towards the airport.

The pilot of one of the planes was Captain Thomas Mantell. The airport called him on the radio. They asked him to take a look at the object, and try to identify it. One of the four pilots hadn’t much fuel left, so he flew on to his own airport. The other two pilots stayed with Mantell, and the three planes began to look for the object.

At first the three pilots could see nothing, and the airport had to help them. Mantell went up to 3000 metres, and left the other two pilots behind. At 2.45 he called the airport and said, ‘I see something above me. I’m going up.’

One of the other two pilots asked the airport, ‘What are we looking for?’

The airport called Mantell: ‘Can you identify the object?’

‘It’s still above me,’ he called back. ‘But I’m getting closer. I’m going up to 6000 metres.’

By now Mantell was far above the other two pilots, and they lost him. They called him on the radio, but they got no answer. They thought he must be in trouble. But they couldn't find him, and soon they hadn't much fuel left, so they had to return to their own airport. When they landed, one pilot refuelled and flew back again. He flew all round the area, but he didn't see Mantell, and he didn't see the object. At 3.50 the airport lost the object.

A few minutes later they had some news. Mantell was dead. His plane crashed into the ground and he was killed at once. No one knew why it crashed.

But the believers knew why Mantell was dead. He fought with a flying saucer and lost. And with a dead pilot, of course the plane crashed.

The believers' story had its surprising new chapter—an Air Force pilot was killed by something (someone?) from another world.

A new word comes into English

Questions rained hard and fast on to the US Air Force. How did Mantell die? What happened to his plane? And of course—what was the Air Force hiding?

The Air Force weren't hiding anything: they were busy trying to find the truth themselves, and it all took time.

In the months that followed, reports began to come in from other countries. In Norway and Denmark and Sweden and Germany, people were reporting 'balls of fire travelling slowly across the sky.' The reports were unclear, and most of them were from newspapers. Soon there were reports from all over Europe and South America.

In the USA, the Air Force was having word trouble. 'Flying saucer' was changing its meaning. At first it meant 'something unusual in the sky'. Now it meant 'something from another world'. And not all reports spoke of things in the form of a saucer. The Air Force didn't want to talk of flying saucers any more. So they made up a new name— Unidentified Flying Object.

Almost at once it became known by its first letters: UFO.

A UFO could be *anything*. But not everyone was happy with the new name. If something is only in a man's mind, ought you to call it an *object*? If it isn't moving in the sky, or if it's only a light, can you say it's *flying*? Suppose you can't *identify* it, but someone else can. It's a UFO for you, but not for him.

'Unidentified' means *hasn't* been identified. (It may be identified later.) But surely we're talking about something quite different: things that *can't* be identified—by anyone. If you can identify my Unidentified Flying

Object, isn't it then an Identified Flying Object? Has my UFO become your IFO?

Today it's best not to think of the three letters or the three words. UFO is just one word, and it's new. Today it means *the cause of a report*. The report may be wrong. The thing may be in someone's mind, or it may be a true object. Maybe it's flying and maybe it isn't. It may be in the sky, or it may be on the ground (and someone believes it has just landed). Maybe some people can identify it and some can't.

None of this matters. As soon as someone *reports* it, it becomes a UFO. Today, the word tells you that someone has made a report—nothing more, nothing less.

But in 1948, the US Air Force was not only in word trouble. It didn't know that 1948 would bring the third of the great UFO reports.

Three great UFOs

At 8.30 in the evening on October 1, a plane was coming in to an airport in North Dakota. The pilot was 25-year-old George Gorman. He flew round the airport for a time, and about nine o'clock he called the airport on his radio. He said he wanted to land. The airport told him there was a small plane (a Piper Cub) in the area. Gorman saw the Cub.

Then he called the airport again. 'The light of