

Has a Top 5 UFO Case Been Solved?

Was the Kecksburg UFO a GE Mark 2 Reentry Vehicle?

By John Ventre and Owen Eichler

On December 9, 1965 at 4:47 pm, something navigated through our airspace and made a semi controlled landing in Kecksburg Pennsylvania. For me, the entire story has been about how it made a left turn near Cleveland and a right turn near Kecksburg and slowed down before minimally “crash” landing in rural Kecksburg and avoiding population centers (like Flight 93). The legend has grown to include one witness who saw a scaly, three fingered hand come out of the top of the UFO, similar to the ending of the 1953 movie “War of the Worlds”, to seeing an alien body on a gurney at Hangar 18 at Wright Patterson Air Force base alongside a cone shaped craft.

I was contacted in February 2015 by Owen Eichler in regards to his theory that the December 9, 1965 Kecksburg UFO incident was potentially a crash and retrieval of a GE Mark 2 reentry vehicle (RV) launched on December 7, 1965. Owen said he has spent ten years researching his theory and believes he is correct. The GE Mark 2 RV has never been mentioned as a possible candidate for Kecksburg. This object was a spy capsule that was kept secret until 1991. I posed a few questions that were significant to the case:

1. How did the object turn, slow down and perform a controlled landing? Owen said the GE reentry vehicle had four control jets and an internal weighting control system for stability and guidance using the coanda effect to glide. Owen also said this was not a NASA project.
2. Why would the military show up in such force for a GE reentry vehicle? Owen said it was used for in-space identification of orbiting space craft and may have contained a Radio Isotope Thermal Generator (RTG) that needed to be recovered in order to control and prevent a radiation leak. The first nuclear power generators were used in 1961.
3. What is the explanation for the writing or symbols on the sides of the object? Owen said it was the result of identification welding on the reentry vehicle because there were numerous launches. The RV was also attached to the Atlas rocket at the base.

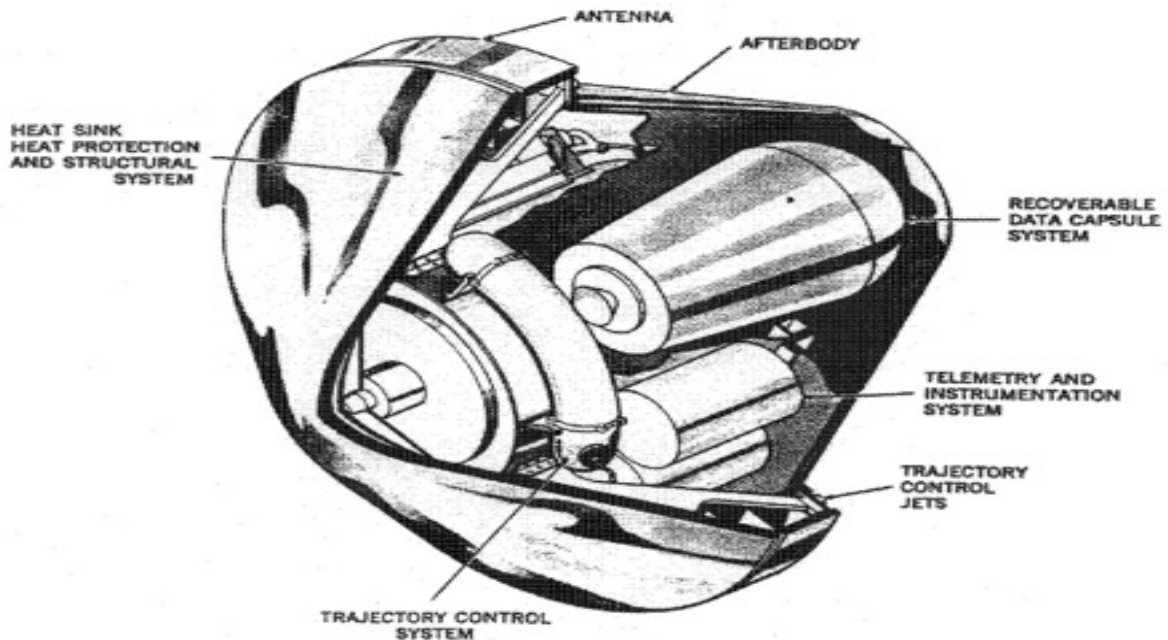
Although I always root for the UFO, Owen got my attention and as the Pa State Director for the Mutual UFO Network, I feel obligated to offer his theory as a possible explanation for the Kecksburg UFO even though I still had questions as to the symbolic writing and whether GE,

NASA or the Air Force can confirm where the loss of the reentry vehicle landed? I contacted experts in the field for a GE phone contact but they didn't have one. I also attempted to contact GE and Lockheed Martin since Lockheed took over the Mark 2 design program and would have the records, but with no luck. I also wondered if the GE Mark 2 didn't collide with Cosmos 96 since the Russians said the Cosmos 96 probe struck something in space. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the event, here's what Owen, who witnessed the in-flight characteristics of the UFO, had to say:

"It was a clear day on December 9, 1965" explains Mr. Eichler, "Myself and several other neighborhood boys and girls were playing baseball in an open area with a wide field of view. As catcher, I saw a bright multi-colored flaming object and called to my playmates to look. I was 13 years old at the time. The predominately green glowing object with wisps of yellow, purple and orange colors was moving from northwest to southeast in my little village of Shafton near Irwin, Pennsylvania. As I had been spending flying time in a small Piper Cub with a neighbor, I was amazed at how low and level the object was moving. I also had spent many hours at a local airport and was familiar with speed and altitude of small airplanes. The object seemed to have a speed somewhat greater than that of small aircraft and a low altitude. In addition, as the object was moving along a path parallel and above the Pennsylvania Turnpike Bridge in the vicinity of the Irwin/North Huntingdon interchange, I can still remember checking the speed against the distance as I was instructed when flying in small aircraft. As I found out later in life, the object travelled an additional 17 miles to Kecksburg and did not significantly lose altitude. But most of all, I was fixated on the predominantly green color of the object." Mr. Eichler discovered later in high school chemistry that the element copper glows green when incinerated in the open atmosphere. The connection of copper and the object he saw in 1965 put him on an investigative path of the origin of the object for the next 45 years. Moving ahead in time to the present, and after many hours of research, Mr. Eichler has determined the object was an American reentry vehicle designed and manufactured by the General Electric Corporation designated as the MK2 blunt body reentry vehicle.

"During the late 1950s, many reentry vehicles were designed and flown by the United States and the USSR for the original goal of delivery of nuclear bombs. Various American types of designs were tested with the so called "blunt body" design as the design of preference. The blunt body design made use of introducing the reentry vehicle into the atmosphere with a large air-pushing event resulting in a buffering of the atmosphere to dissipate heat from the reentry vehicle. The American design used a section-spherical design while the Soviets used a full spherical design. The American design incorporated controls and jets to "steer" the reentry vehicle while in orbit whereas the Soviet version may not have incorporated such steering controls. Also, the

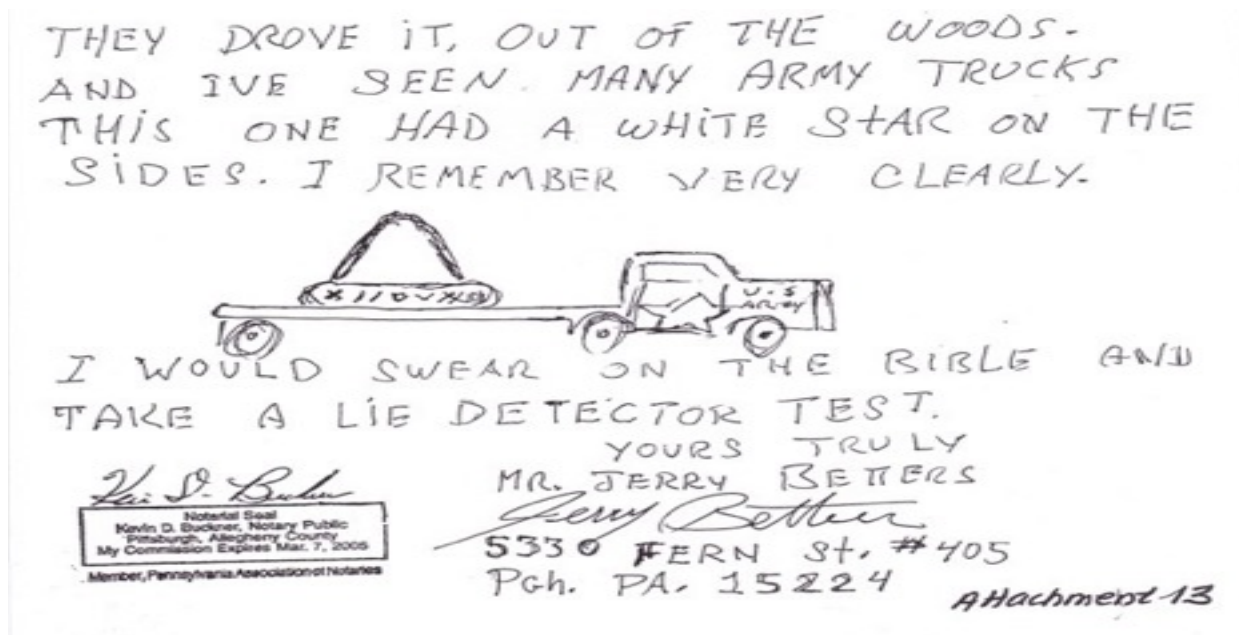
American design used an internal moveable weighted control system for maneuvering in dense atmosphere closer to earth enabling the reentry vehicle to climb, descend and make turns.



(Figure 1- GE Mark 2 prototype reentry vehicle)



(Figure 2- GE Mark 2 Reentry vehicle)



(Figure 3- Notarized deposition of witness Jerry Betters)

“Referring to Figure’s 1-3; note the shape of the General Electric MK2 reentry vehicle. Also note the internal components such as a recoverable data capsule system and a trajectory control system. The shape of the vehicle resembles the description given by eyewitnesses as that as an acorn. Also depicted are the control jets used to maneuver while in orbit. When in controlled level flight in the atmosphere, the blunt end of the vehicle encountering the forward oncoming atmosphere can be tilted by the use of the trajectory control system to change the leading edge of the vehicle thereby changing/steering the path of the vehicle. The vehicle then in effect can rise or fall or turn left or right. This in flight capability was demonstrated by the object seen by many observers. And, during the final moments of the event when the reentry vehicle landed in Kecksburg, an eyewitness, Frances Kalp, remarked about seeing a "four star" object. The "four star" reference most likely was the four control jets used to steer the vehicle while in orbit and possibly used to change the descent speed. Note the similarities between the prototype, the actual MK2 RV and the hand drawn sketch/deposition by musician Jerry Betters who had never seen a MK2 RV or any other space craft up close. As explained below, the MK2 had various capabilities for delivering many payloads such as a nuclear device. Note the funneled end of the MK2 RV. Provisions are made to eject a data capsule, or possibly a camera/film canister for later recovery.”

What about the predominantly green color of the object? Mr. Eichler states, "I was able to confirm that the blunt end of the object, the heat sink, was made of copper with minute alloying metals such as beryllium. Reports of green fireballs seen in the southwestern state of New Mexico occurring during the 1950s involving early test flights of reentry vehicles were followed up by ground surveys identifying copper residue over and above normal levels in the low-flying flight path of objects seen flying over the area. Copper heat sinks sound counter-intuitive to protecting a reentry vehicle from heat but the physics of the blunt body design demonstrate that there can be ample heat protection. As a note of record, later RV heat rejection techniques used an ablative material; a design that allows for heat absorption and subsequent stripping of the ablative material from the reentry vehicle to release heat. The ablative design allowed for a completely different physical shape than that of the MK2 reentry vehicle."

For a military perspective, Mr. Eichler added, "This was a cold war project based on the A4 German rocket, commonly known as the V2, designed by Werner Von Braun. The MK2 was the first reentry vehicle to be used to carry an atomic warhead carrying up to 1.5 megatons of TNT equivalent at that time. An historical item of note is WWII Germany and Mr. Von Braun conceptualizing an A10 multi-stage rocket with an atomic warhead to send via air mail to New York City."

"The MK2 reentry vehicle was put atop the United States' Thor and Atlas rocket vehicles. Many of these weapons were deployed in various parts of the world with designations of IRBMs (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles). For example, under "Project Emily", up to 60 of the Thor IRBMs were deployed to Great Britain in the early 1960s. The United States sent the missiles and a training team from Vandenberg Air Force Base, here in the United States, to Great Britain. There were other deployments as well. Referring to figures 4 and 5, note the nose of the Thor rocket with provisions to receive the MK2 RV. Also note the general size of the installed MK2 as compared to the Air Force personnel standing below it."



(Figure 4- Thor rocket illustrating the Mark 2 Reentry vehicle insertion point)



(Figure 5- Mark 2 Reentry vehicle installed at top and ready for lift off)



(Figure 6- Atlas rocket with Mark 2 Reentry vehicle installed)

Mr Eichler further stated, "The deployment of the Thor MK2 armed nuclear missile was eventually recalled from Great Britain as a result of advancing technology and the vulnerability of the MK2 reentry vehicle to intercepting enemy aircraft as the MK2 was slow moving and could be shot down. However, during the 1960s the United States Atlas Rocket was phased in to deliver the MK2 reentry vehicle. The Atlas SM-65 rocket gave some advantages that the Thor rocket was lacking. For example, much longer range and orbiting capabilities. The Thor rocket could only deliver a sub-orbital payload. With the Atlas Rocket, the IRBM became an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM). With the introduction of the Atlas rocket also came smaller and more efficient reentry vehicles. So, then, because there were so many of the MK2's made, possibly over 2000 units, they became useful in other areas of space research and development. Many MK2 vehicles were used to monitor atmospheric parameters in support of the United States moon landing. Another remarkable program employed by the United States was Program 437. The latter program, akin to President Reagan's "Star Wars" initiative, focused on using a nuclear explosion in space to disable an enemy's satellite with Electro-magnetic Pulse waves.

"I also have a suspicion that the strange markings around the base of the Kecksburg UFO may have been caused by the superstructure of a second reentry vehicle being welded to the base of the MK2. After the remnants of the superstructure burned away

upon reentry of the MK2 in the atmosphere, all that would be left would be illegible weld spoils in various unintelligible configurations when seen by a common bystander. And, in addition, the base of the MK2 is the only place of attachment of a superstructure as the rest of the MK2 was buried in nose of the launch vehicle and was made of thick 316 alloy stainless steel sheeting, copper cladded and overall electro-coated with platinum. Also, the strange markings may be identification marks created with a welding stick and a welder to provide positive identification as to the particular model (MK2A, MK2B, and MK2C) of the RV and its payload”.

The possibility of the reentry vehicle that landed in Kecksburg of carrying a nuclear warhead is remote. Witnesses stated they saw people dressed in what they describe as full body suits and carrying something resembling what is commonly called a Geiger counter. Examination of Mr. Eichler's research demonstrates many reentry vehicles of the 1960s needed a power source. Mr. Eichler says, "Early power sources utilized batteries, with AC-DC inverters or nuclear thermopiles. The power source of record was a Radio-isotope Thermal Generator (RTG). The generator uses a nuclear material that generates heat. The heat, in turn, heats a thermocouple assembly to generate electricity to power communications and control systems. In the early models, Plutonium-238, Curium 244 and Strontium 90 were used as the heat source. Factually, the authorities would be looking to verify the structural integrity of the reentry vehicle was not breached as a result of the impact potentially releasing radioactive contaminants from the RTG.”

All of Owen's proof can be found by searching the internet. I also found this information online:

The Corona program was operated by the CIA with assistance of the Air Force and was used to spy on the Soviet Union and China beginning in June 1959 and ending in May 1972. Program 437 turned the PGM-17 Thor into an operational anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon system; a capability that was kept top secret. The Program 437 mission was approved for development by U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on November 20, 1962 and was based at the Johnson Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. Program 437 used Thor missiles and added booster engines to achieve orbital flights. Eighteen more sub-orbital and orbital Thor launches took place from Johnston Island during the 1964–1975 periods in support of Program 437. In 1965–1966 four Program 437 Thors were launched with “Alternate Payloads” for satellite inspection from Johnston Island. Two of the four payloads were designated as APX-1 and APX-2 both of which carried cameras. These launches were evidently an elaboration of a proposed system to allow visual verification of an in-space target before potentially destroying it. These flights may have been related to the late 1960s Program 922, a non-nuclear version of Thor with infrared homing and a high explosive warhead. Care was taken to avoid even the appearance of aiming toward a

Soviet satellite. These were U.S. Air Force missions that evaluated reusable, maneuverable, re-entry vehicle designs that might be able to fly to a precise landing point on earth.

There were four launches planned from Johnson Island in 1965; three are listed as successful. The first one on December 7, 1965 does not list an outcome. On December 7, 1965 at 19:29 Military Standard Time (MST), the 10 ADS Air Force crew launched Thor missile Number J8-2299 skyward on an interception azimuth of 153. The target was SPADATS object Number 613; an expended Atlas Agena rocket body. Interception occurred 8:18 minutes after launching following normal lift-off, booster separation, flight path assumption, and payload operation. The camera-bearing capsule registered a miss of .56 nautical miles from the programmed standoff distance of 3.2 nautical miles. All payload functions were performed normally up to separation except for film cutting and sealing operations. The failure was academic; however since the ejected film capsule was stated as never recovered and was visible at 19:45 heading for the ocean. The outcome of this mission is a prime candidate for the Kecksburg UFO!

There would have been a five hour time difference from Johnson Island to Kecksburg Pennsylvania due to daylight savings time in 1965. That would put the reentry vehicle loss at 12:45am eastern standard time on December 8th. Could it stay in orbit for over 39 hours? The answer is yes: it could take two hours to three days to come down from low earth orbit. For example, the December 9, 1965 launch from Vandenberg AFB of a Thor Agena-D took two days to recover after an erratic attitude. More complete analysis is required of the RV/rocket separation which altered descent characteristics since the Air Force said they lost track of it at 7:45pm on December 7th. There is no question that the MK2 RV was capable of extended orbital capabilities and controlled landing.

I attended the 50th anniversary UFO festival in Kecksburg in July 2015 where witnesses told their story and I also analyzed the testimonials on Stan Gordon's Kecksburg DVD created in 1998. Although Project Blue Book said that there were only three Air Force personnel on site to recover a meteor, numerous civilian witnesses verified that there were as many as 25 armed military personnel present. Project Moon Dust was in place at that time and the response was consistent with this project's recovery efforts. Witnesses also said, "It glowed green in the sky, it was a burnt orange color on the ground, the site may be radioactive, there was an arcing blue light coming from the woods, it looked like Egyptian hieroglyphics were welded on a bead in different designs around the base and that four guys in NASA moon suits took a four to five foot box into the area".

There have been a number of theories over the years to explain Kecksburg:

1. A meteor.

2. Extraterrestrial craft.
3. Cosmos 96 Soviet satellite recovery.
4. Nazi Bell project or some other government experiment.

It makes sense that the December 7, 1965 GE Mark 2 launch in the Pacific was tracked on radar. This explains the military response within 30 minutes to the small rural town of Kecksburg. The copper heat shielding would glow green, the stainless steel would turn a burnt orange color, and the technicians on site would wear proper radiation suits and would carry the correct size lead box for a radioactive power source. They may have had to cut the power source out with a blow torch and walked it out of the woods like the arc of the covenant. They could not risk a radiation leak when exiting a residential area. It was equally as important not to divulge we were spying on Russia.

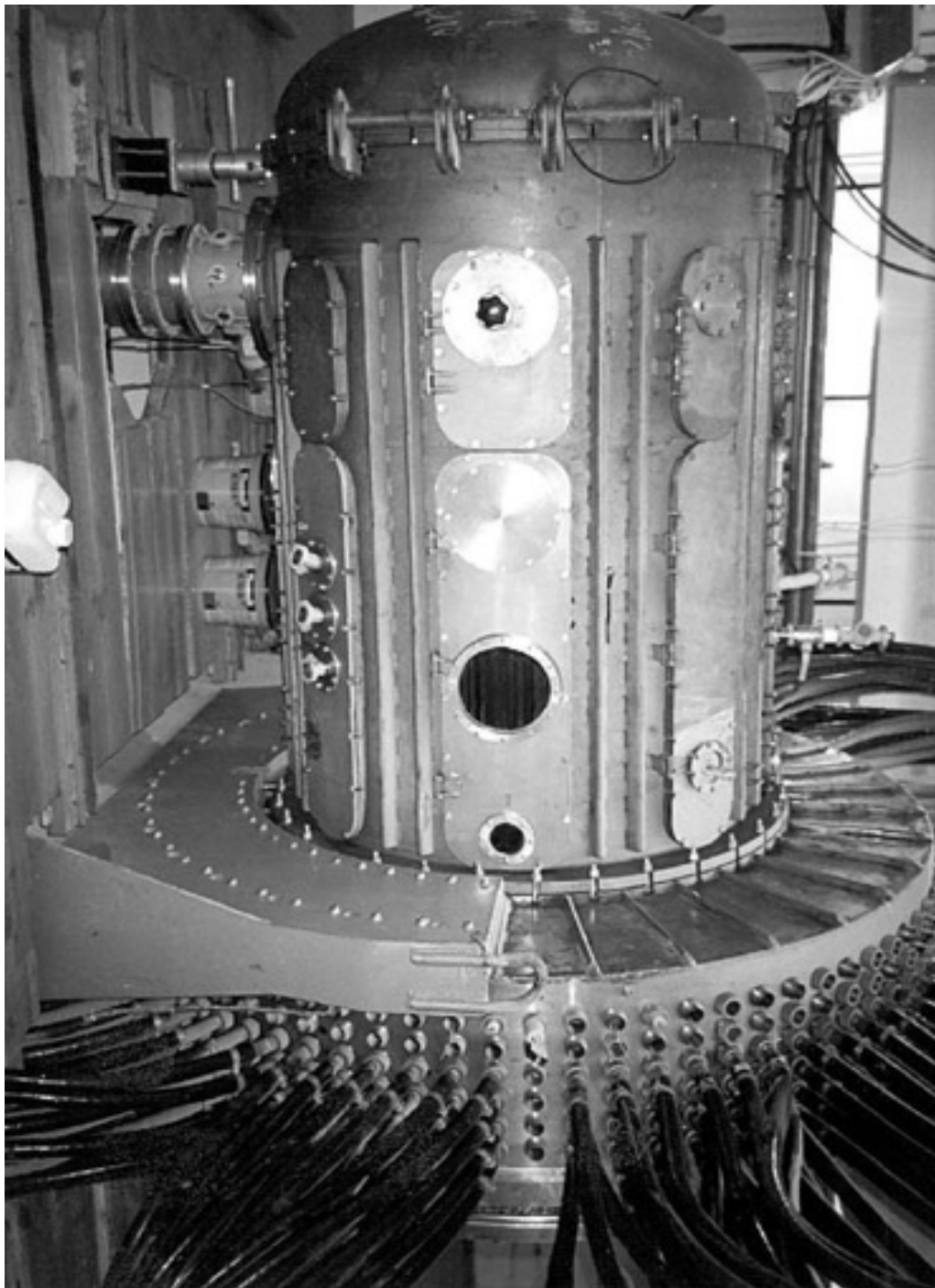
Since NASA has eliminated the Cosmos 96 probe as the Kecksburg UFO by confirming it came down 13 hours earlier, after our exhaustive research, we are only left with the Bell Project, a Mark 2 failure or a real extraterrestrial UFO. Since NASA was ordered by a Federal court to turn over its files on Kecksburg and they responded that the file box was lost, it is doubtful that NASA will confirm or deny our GE Mark 2 theory. Without confirmation from NASA, GE, the Air Force or the Navy, we have the most scientific explanation for Kecksburg but can only add the GE Mark 2 reentry vehicle to the short list of an extraterrestrial craft that maneuvered in the sky and crashed or a government spy reentry vehicle that fired its control jets and minimally crash landed. We believe a GE Mark 2 RV landed in Kecksburg. What do you think? After 50 years, we respectfully request witnesses involved in the recovery from NASA, the Army and Air Force come forward and provide details and confirmation of the incident.

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Additional Pictures:



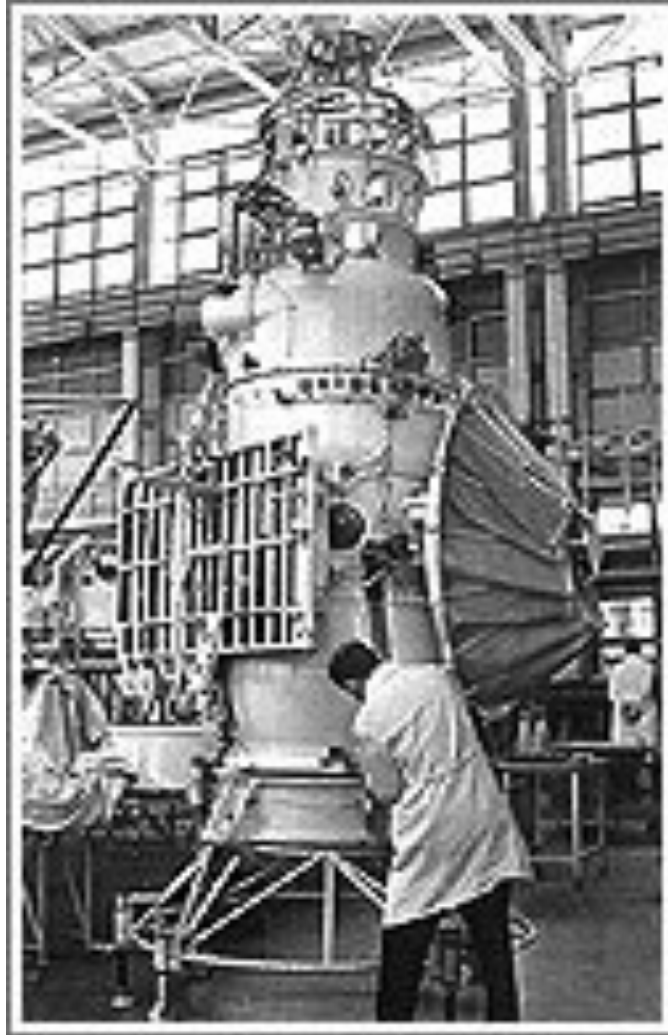
(Figure 7- Nazi Bell- www.diehanse.tumblr.com)



(Figure 8- Nazi Bell reactor- www.diehanse.tumblr.com)



(Figure 9- a GE Mark 2 that was never flown)



(Figure 10- Cosmos 96)

Additional notes from the 1998 Stan Gordon Kecksburg DVD:

Here are some important witness comments:

1. Randy Overly- it glowed green
2. Bob Gatty- site may be radioactive.
3. John Hays- chased out of woods and told area may be radioactive.
4. Bill Weaver- 4 guys in moon suits carried a 4x4 box into the woods.
5. Ernie Hoffman- it was the size of 2 suitcases on the flatbed.
6. John Mays- 20-25 military on site; blue lights in woods.
7. Robert Blystone- Military was all over site.
8. Larry Snyder- Armed military barred access.

9. Lillian Hays- Military and civilian personnel used her house and phone. No calls registered on bill.
10. John Hays- Air Force and NASA at their home saw NASA patches on clothing.
11. Bill Bulebush- It made a turn. Saw Egyptian markings.
12. James Romanski- Saw Egyptian markings that looked like they were welded on.
13. Jerry Betters- drew the only notarized sketch of object on flatbed and it 100% matches the GE Mark 4.

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BIO: John Ventre

John Ventre is the retired PA-WV-VA State Security and Public Affairs Director for UPS and was his Companies liaison to his local Congressman.

John is a multi-State Director for the Mutual UFO Network. John is the author of 6 novels. It was John's research into end time prophecy and cultures that got him interested in UFOs in 1996. John is an occasional columnist for 7 different magazines.

John served on the Board of Directors for Juvenile Diabetes, the Westmoreland Economic Growth Connection, MUFON, Rotary and was a United Way Tocqueville Society member for charitable giving. John is his Rotary Club President.

John appeared on the Anderson Cooper show in 2012 and has appeared in over 50 episodes on 7 TV series including 19 episodes on History Channels "Hanger 1" and 26 episodes on PCTV21's "UFOs over Pittsburgh". John was a guest on Coast to Coast AM in 2014 and 2015 and lectured at the Wizard World Comicon in 2015.

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