



## Editor, MUFON UFO Journal

*(PLEASE NOTE: This story was written in late 1983 and published in the January 1984 issue of the MUFON UFO Journal, in the middle of the one year that I was editor of the Journal. I had attended a MUFON Symposium several months earlier in Lincoln, Nebraska and was surprised to be questioned about this incident. Until then I thought only a few people knew about it. Yet it had gotten out into the world of UFO researchers and had taken on a life of its own. Photos of the fake document and accompanying note illustrated the MUFON article. I no longer have the document or note but have reproduced the text of both. They will be found at the end of this story.)*

A story gaining credence among some UFO researchers concerns the reported landing of a UFO near a missile site in South Dakota on November 16, 1977, with the UFO's occupants stealing the missile's nuclear components and wounding a security policeman.

It has come to be known as the "Ellsworth Case" because the missile site is under the command of Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City, South Dakota.

As one of those who investigated the alleged incident, I can say positively that it never happened.

Unfortunately, some people choose to believe otherwise. Let me explain some of what I know about the "Ellsworth Case" and perhaps we can lay it to rest.

### THE BACKGROUND

On February 9, 1978, when I was a staff reporter for the National Enquirer, we received an anonymous letter at our Florida offices that was mailed from Rapid City. Because it apparently involved UFOs, it was turned over to Bill Dick, then an articles editor who was responsible for most UFO stories. The envelope contained what appeared to be a carbon copy of an official U.S. Air Force incident report, plus a brief, unsigned, typewritten note. The report was stamped FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY at top and bottom.

Supposedly from the commander of the 44th Missile Security Squadron, it described the incident as a **Helping Hand (security violation) / Covered Wagon (security violation) at Lima 9 (68th SMSq Area), seven miles SW of Nisland, SD at 2100 hours on 16 Nov. 1977.**



The person identified as receiving the report was **Paul D. Hinzman, SSgt, USAF, Comm/Plotter, Wing Security Control**. It stated that two security policemen were involved, identified as Airmen First Class Kenneth C. Jenkins and Wayne E. Raeke (pronounced RAY-Key, we learned later).

It also said the incident was investigated by Captain Larry D. Stokes and TSgt. Robert E. Stewart. The identity numbers and squadron assignments of all these men were also given.

### AN O.Z. ALERT

Briefly, the report said that at 10:59 PM on November 16, 1977, an OZ, or Outer Zone, alarm had been activated at Lima Nine missile site (meaning the missile compound had been penetrated) and that Jenkins and Raeke had been dispatched as a Security Alert Team (SAT) from the Lima Launch Control Facility, some thirty-five minutes away by road.

Upon arriving at Lima Nine, Raeke went to the rear fence line, where he encountered an individual dressed in a glowing green metallic uniform and helmet, who fired some kind of weapon, disintegrating Raeke's rifle and burning his hands and arms.



Jenkins radioed for help, carried Raeke back to the SAT vehicle and then returned to the rear fence line himself. There, he saw two similarly dressed individuals, ordered them to a halt and when they didn't he shot them both, one through the shoulder and the other through the helmet.

However, within seconds both rose up and disappeared over a hill. Jenkins followed them and saw them enter a thirty-foot-diameter saucer-shaped object, which immediately took off and vanished over the horizon.

Investigators later found that the missile's nuclear components were missing.

Meanwhile, the injured Raeke was air-evacuated to an undisclosed location. [See the text of the document at bottom for the details.]

The unsigned note claimed the incident actually did happen, that the writer – saying he couldn't give his name because he was still on active duty – was part of the investigation team and that the Air Force had imposed extremely tight security on the whole thing.

## REACTION

Obviously, this was a fantastic story, if it was true. The report form certainly seemed authentic, but the report itself sounded very much like a hoax. However, it had to be checked out.

We were certain the Air Force would deny it, either way, so we did not make any immediate attempt to verify it through official channels. However, we did make a number of phone calls to the Ellsworth air base and Rapid City and, to our surprise, everyone named in the report actually did exist.

Furthermore, everyone was then on duty – except one. We could not reach Raeke, the airman allegedly burned and evacuated. The phone number given for him by the Base Locator simply didn't answer, as if it had been disconnected.

By the end of the day we began to believe there might be something to this after all, and we decided to take a firsthand look.

Everything was handled in great secrecy to protect any exclusive story that might develop. The next morning, Bill Dick and I and Tony Brenna, a senior reporter, flew off to Rapid City, and only two or three other people on the staff knew where we were for the next ten days.

In Rapid City, we spent the first day and a half quietly seeking any information that would indicate the incident had taken place. We also tried to take a look at Lima Nine, but roads leading to it were blocked by snowdrifts.

From the moment we arrived we had tried repeatedly to reach Jenkins and Raeke by phone and finally got through to Jenkins late on Saturday afternoon. Without being specific, we tried to persuade him to come into town and talk to us. However, he was extremely suspicious and refused.

On Sunday morning, we decided to make our first direct contact. Both Sergeant Hinzman and Captain Stokes lived in the city, and I went to Hinzman's home and Brenna went to see Stokes.

Hinzman was polite and courteous and he invited me into his home. When I related

the story told in the report, he reacted with interest and genuine surprise, wondering why he had never heard about the incident before.

## DISCREPANCIES

Then, as we discussed the incident, he began to point out a few things wrong, including the fact that he was not a communications plotter for Wing Security Control as the document said but had a job connected with missile maintenance. He also said Sergeant Stewart's first name was Roderick, not Robert, and that Captain Stokes was not a Flight Security Officer (FSO), as the report said, but was in charge of all the FSOs for all the missile flights under Ellsworth's command.

Across town, Brenna was hearing the same thing from Stokes, who also said that he had been in a hospital on the date in question. Stokes phoned the base to inquire about the incident and a short while later, before Brenna left Stokes' home, Brenna received a phone call from Security headquarters at the base.

He was asked to stop questioning Air Force personnel off base and was told that if we wanted to discuss the matter we were welcome to come to Security headquarters on Monday. Brenna agreed.

That afternoon, a third reporter, Eric Mishara, flew in from another assignment in California and joined us. He rented a four-wheel-drive vehicle and spent most of the following week interviewing ranchers and others in the neighborhood of the Lima Nine site. He found no one who knew anything about the incident.

On Monday morning, Bill Dick, Tony Brenna and I went to Ellsworth, but instead of talking with Security officials we were rerouted to the office of Major Arthur Jungwirth, information officer for the base.

We told him what we were investigating and, after making some phone calls, he assured us that nothing of that nature had ever happened. Then, over the next five days, he arranged for us to interview in his office all of the key people named in the report – including Raeke, who had simply been out in the field for a number of days when we first tried to reach him by phone from Florida.

Ellsworth commands Lima and fourteen other missile flights consisting of ten missiles each, all scattered across 13,500 square miles of western South Dakota. Security policemen such as Raeke and Jenkins (who, we later became convinced, had never met one another) spend a minimum of seventy-two hours in the field and often more when winter snows closed the roads

As for the phone in Raeke's living quarters, it was simply out of order.

We were allowed to tape record all interviews, and everyone we talked to answered

virtually all of our questions (although one sergeant said his personal life was none of our business).

Jungwirth also gave us photocopies of Security Police Desk Blotters for both Lima Launch Control Facility and Wing Security Control, which were minute-by-minute logs of all activities on November 16 and 17. Everything was routine.

He also gave us copies of hospital records showing when Captain Stokes was admitted and discharged.

### WE MEET RAEKE

Early in the week we talked with Raeke by phone while he was out in the field. On Thursday, when he returned to the base, he immediately came to Jungwirth's office and again submitted to our questions.

Raeke also rolled up sleeves and allowed us to photograph his hands and arms, which bore no signs of any injuries.

During the week, we managed to take a good look at Lima Nine. Contrary to what the report said, there is no hill behind it and no way anyone could take cover from someone wanting to shoot at them. The area around the compound is quite flat, although there is a hill a quarter of a mile to the west.

On Saturday, after nine days in Rapid City, Dick, Mishara and I returned to Florida while Brenna flew to Raeke's hometown in Indiana. There, he obtained a copy of the high school yearbook and verified that Raeke was, indeed, Raeke. He also checked with the director of the funeral home, who told us that Raeke was home on leave on November 16, attending his grandfather's funeral.

### TAPES ANALYZED

Back in Florida, I took all the tape cassettes to C.R. McQuiston, an expert in PSE, or Psychological Stress Analysis. He analyzed the tapes and concluded that there was no reason to suspect that anyone we talked to in Jungwirth's office was telling us anything but the truth.

However, McQuiston found sufficient stress in the tape of one person not named in the report to suspect he might have perpetrated the hoax. Some days later, Brenna returned to Rapid City and confronted that person. However, the man denied being involved, and the matter was dropped.

We found more than twenty discrepancies or errors in the report – wrong names, identity numbers, occupations, physical layouts and so on. Had the Security Option alert mentioned in the report taken place, it would have involved all security personnel at the

base, and everyone at the base and in Rapid City (population 45,000 plus) would have known about it.

It would be easy to say the Air Force falsified numerous documents, muzzled everyone on the base and in the city, published a phony high school yearbook, and so on, but that is highly unlikely.

The fact that the story is now circulating is perhaps my own fault. Several years later I described the whole thing to several UFO researchers as an example of hoaxes, and I probably passed on a copy of the alleged report. From there, the report gained a life of its own.

Unfortunately, one researcher later was told by an Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) agent that the incident really did happen, and that is all some people needed. What the agent's motive was, I don't know. I have been told recently that he has since admitted it never did occur.

Last June [1983], a national weekly magazine carried a story on the "Ellsworth Case," and quoted a well-known UFO researcher with several books to his credit as saying it did happen and that the Air Force "had snowed the investigators." Perhaps he was misquoted. If not, his own credibility is in question.

We spent a total of forty-four man-days investigating this at a cost to the Enquirer (counting salaries, expenses, etc.) of more than \$15,000 [at the time a considerable sum of money]. We had no doubt that the incident as described in the so-called report never occurred.

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## TEXT OF DOCUMENT

(see glossary at end for definitions)

**INCIDENT/COMPLAINT REPORT from COMMANDER, 44 Missile Security Squadron, Ellsworth AFB, SD 57706:**

**HELPING HAND (SECURITY VIOLATION) / COVERED WAGON (SECURITY VIOLATION), Site Lima 9 (68<sup>th</sup> SMSq Area) 7 miles SW of Nisland, SD**

**“At 2059hrs., 16 Nov 77, A1C PHILLIPS, Samuel A., Lima Security Control, telephoned WSC and reported an OZ alarm activation at L-9 and that Lima SAT #1, A1C JENKINS AND A1C RAEKE were dispatched. (Trip #62, ETA 2135hrs.) At 2147hrs., A1C PHILLIPS telephoned WSC and reported that the situation at L-9 had been upgraded to a COVERED WAGON per request of CAPT. STOKES, Larry D., FSO. Security Option II was activated by WSC and Base CSC. BAF (Backup Security Force) #1672, were formed. At 2340hrs, 16 Nov 77, the following information was learned: Upon arrival (2132hrs) at site #L-9, LSAT, JENKINS & RAEKE, dismounted the SAT vehicle to make a check of the site fence line. At**

this time RAEKE observed a bright light shining vertically upwards from the rear of the fence line at L-9. (There is a small hill approximately 50 yards behind L-9) JENKINS stayed with the sat vehicle and RAEKE proceeded to the source of the light to investigate. As RAEKE approached the crest of the hill, he observed an individual dressed in a glowing green metallic uniform and wearing a helmet with visor. RAEKE immediately challenged the individual, however; the individual refused to stop and kept walking towards the rear fence line of L-9. RAEKE aimed his M-16 rifle at the intruder and ordered him to stop. The intruder turned towards RAEKE and aimed a object at RAEKE which emitted a bright flash of intense light. The flash of light struck RAEKE'S M-16 rifle, disintegrating the weapon and causing second and third degree burns to RAEKE'S hands. RAEKE immediately took cover and concealment and radioed the situation to JENKINS, who in turn radioed a 10-13 distress to Lima Control. JENKINS responded to RAEKE'S position and carried RAEKE back to the SAT vehicle. JENKINS then returned to the rear fence line to stand guard. JENKINS observed two intruders dressed in the same uniforms walk through the rear fence line of L-9. JENKINS challenged the two individuals but they refused to stop. JENKINS aimed and fired two rounds from his M-16 rifle. One bullet struck one intruder in the back and one bullet struck one intruder in the helmet. Both intruders fell to the ground; however, approximately 15 seconds later both returned to an upright position and fired several flashes of light at JENKINS. JENKINS too cover and the light missed JENKINS. The two intruders returned to the east side of the hill and disappeared. JENKINS followed the two and observed them go inside a saucer shaped object approximately 30' and 20' thick. The object emitted a glowing greenish light. Once the intruders were inside, the object climbed vertically upward and disappeared over the western horizon. BAF #1 arrived at the site at 2330hrs, and set up a security perimeter. Site Survey Teams arrived at the site (0120hrs.) and took radiation reading, which measured from 1.7 to 2.9 roentgens. Missile Maintenance examined the missile and warhead and found the nuclear component missing from the warhead. COL. SPRAKER, Wing Cmdr., arrived at the site and declared the site a National Defense Areas and ordered all non-essential personnel out of the area. All evidence found at the scene and the follow-up report will be classified by order of COL. Spraker.

“ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: RAEKE was treated at the base Hospital by MOD (Capt) Sanders for second and third degree radiation burns to each hand. RAEKE was Air-O-Vacced to an unspecified location. RAEKE'S M-16 rifle could not be located at the site.”

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## GLOSSARY

Helping Hand: A minor security violation.

Covered Wagon: A more serious violation.

Corn/Plotter: Communications plotter.

AIC: Airman first class.

**WSC: Wing Security Control.**

**OZ: Outer Zone**

**L-9: Lima Nine, code name for missile site number nine in the Limo Missile Flight consisting of ten missile sites.**

**FSO: Flight security officer.**

**Security Option II: Pre-set response to serious security breach, involving the recall of all off-duty security personnel and additional manning of all missile sites.**

**Base CSC: Central Security Control for the entire base.**

**BAF: Backup Alert Force.**

**SAT Vehicle: Truck used by Security Alert Team for response to alarms.**

**10-13 Distress: Radio code signal for “security policeman needing assistance.”**

**MOD: Medical officer of the day.**

**SAC: Strategic Air Command.**

**44SMW: 44th Strategic Missile Wing.**

**MSS: Missile Security Squadron.**

**68th SMSq: 68th Strategic Missile Squadron.**

**ETA: Estimated time of arrival.**

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## TEXT OF THE ANONYMOUS NOTE

**29 Jan 78**

Dear Enquirer:

The incident stated in the attached report actually occurred. The Air Force appointed a special team of individuals to investigate the incident. I was one of those individuals. I am still on active duty and so cannot state my name at this

time. It is not that I do not trust the Enquirer (I sure you would treat my name with confidence) but I do not trust others. The incident which occurred on 16 Nov 77, was classified Top Secret on 2 Dec 77. At that time I obtained a copy of the original report. I thought at the time that the Air Force would probably hush the whole thing up, and they did. The Air Force ordered the silence on 1 DEC 77, after which, the report was classified. There were 16 pictures taken at the scene. I do not have access to the pictures at this time.

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#### A FINAL COMMENT (written February 4, 2002)

Some researchers believe that, although the Ellsworth incident might have been a hoax, the Air Force "engineered" the whole thing to distract attention from something else it wanted to hide. What that could be, I have no idea. One researcher told me there had been many UFO sightings in that area at that time, but if so I was never aware of them. Nor can I imagine why the Air Force would attract the attention of Enquirer reporters if it did have something to hide. On the other hand, my editor, Bill Dick, who died a few years later, was convinced that the Air Force was covering up something.

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