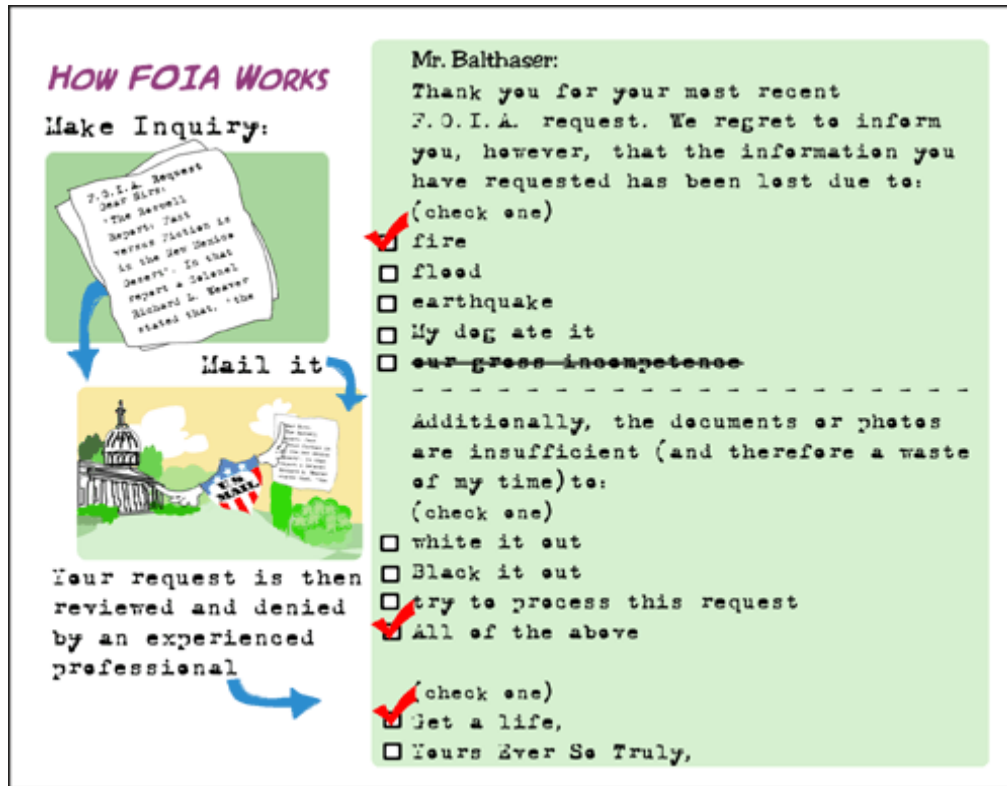


## Searching for the Truth

(Always Telling the Truth Means Never Having to Remember Anything)



“Is Anyone Accountable for Records?”

03-01-06

One of the most troublesome things I have encountered during my many years of doing UFO research, is the lack of accountability by those supposedly in control of documents and information pertaining to this subject. Of course it's by no means limited to just UFOlogy research, but also to many other areas, within our military and government establishments. Trying to obtain documents from those groups for validation of information is practically impossible, and it appears to me that no one wants to take responsibility for that. My question has always been---who has given those individuals the authority to withhold information and not be accountable for it? Responses like “the records were destroyed”, or “were transferred to another agency”, are too frequently used when requesting information.

In this editorial I will give some examples of such instances, where I have personally tried to obtain information, as well as that of other individuals who have also been denied information through various attempts.

One of the most common responses to document requests is “blacking out” certain information on documents. That no longer looks good on television when researchers like Stanton Friedman hold up the documents, so in some cases “whiteout” is now used.

Military Records are kept at the National Personnel Records Center in St Louis, Missouri. Many times when a Freedom of Information Act Request (FOIA) is submitted (as required), pertaining to an individual assigned to Roswell Army Airfield in 1947, the response returned has a rubber stamp note stating, “ No record located. If on file on July 12, 1973, ***it may have been destroyed*** in a fire on that date”. *May have been destroyed? Was it destroyed or not?* In my experience, an appeal rarely produces any additional information. The military personnel I usually request information on were assigned to the 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing in Roswell, (the only Atomic bomb group in the world at the time), and their records may have been destroyed in a fire. Convenient, unfortunate, or an untruth!!!

One request for information that I worked on, starting in July 1999, with a FOIA request involved the United States Air Force report, “The Roswell Report: Fact versus Fiction in the New Mexico Desert”. In that report a Colonel Richard L. Weaver stated that, “the photographs taken in General Ramey’s office were sent to a national-level organization for interpretation and analysis”. That “unnamed organization” reported back that, “the photos were of insufficient quality to analyze”. My first request was submitted to the Department of the Air Force at the Pentagon, requesting copies of the correspondence between the Air Force and the national-level organization that analyzed the photographs, along with copies of the report returned to the Air Force. After several delay letters from the Air Force, in November 1999 I was informed that all records regarding this subject were returned to the Air Force Historical Research agency at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

When I contacted Maxwell AFB, I was told they have no such documents within their archives, nor did they have any inter-office documents regarding the “Roswell Report”, and I was invited to file an appeal. What I did receive from Maxwell Air Force Base was an 81-page list of information available on microfilm about Roswell Army Airfield dealing with everything the base was associated with except information about the Roswell Incident. I didn’t feel that information about the base “Supply and Food Service, Motor Vehicles, when aircraft arrived at the base, or maintenance of aircraft” were pertinent to my FOIA request. Basically this meant there were no documents in the Air Force archives to substantiate the remarks made by Colonel Weaver in the Air Force Report about the Roswell Incident.

By March 2000, I had received so many delay responses while the Air Force searched their records, that I finally told the Lieutenant in charge of my request that he would probably be promoted to Major or Lt. Colonel by the time my requests were fulfilled, if ever fulfilled.

Since the Air Force report was an official document, I asked if Colonel Weaver had ever been contacted to determine where he obtained the information he was referring to in the report about the photographs being analyzed by a national-level organization. The

response from the Air Force about that request stated, “we are not obligated to do so under FOIA”, since anything that is not tangible or a documentary record does not qualify as a “record”.

I did obtain one page of a 4-page “Fax” from the University of Texas at Arlington, Special Collections, addressed to Captain McAndrew indicating he was receiving 3 pages of “something”. Since the University of Texas at Arlington is the repository for those photographs, the date of the fax was 07-18-96, and it was addressed to Captain McAndrew, I’m assuming the pages dealt with the next excuse the Air Force presented in 1997 entitled “The Roswell Incident: Case Closed”. Additionally in this response from Maxwell AFB, I was advised that “the custody of these records was currently being transferred from Maxwell AFB to the National Archives either in Maryland or Washington DC.

I indicated my disappointment to the lieutenant in charge of my FOIA request at Maxwell AFB in October 2000, and had to write again in February 2001 since I did not receive a response to my October letter. When he responded I noticed he had been promoted to Captain (on his way to Major as I mentioned earlier). Again I was advised that I could submit an appeal and my final correspondence to Maxwell AFB occurred on March 7, 2001.

Researcher David Rudiak has suggested that I resume my research on this, however since the documents have been transferred to a National Archive, it would mean starting over.

As a final example, the late New Mexico Congressman Steven Schiff made a valiant attempt to obtain information about the Roswell Incident in the 1990’s, when he requested a full investigation of the Incident. Congressman Schiff released the 20-page, General Accounting Office (GAO) Report in a press release on July 28, 1995. In the press release Congressman Schiff indicated that, “important documents which may have shed more light on what happened at Roswell, are missing.”

The Chief Archivist for the National Personnel Records Center provided the GAO with documentation indicating that (1) RAAF records such as finance and accounting, supplies, buildings and grounds, and other general administrative matters from March 1945 through December 1949 and (2) RAAF outgoing messages from October 1946 through December 1949 were destroyed. The document disposition form did not properly indicate the authority under which the disposal action was taken. Other records including outgoing RAAF messages for 1950 were also destroyed. Schiff understood that these outgoing messages were permanent records, which should never have been destroyed. Since the records had been destroyed over 40 years ago, further inquiry about their destruction was impractical according to Schiff.

An FBI Teletype document revealed by the report referred to a “radar-tracking device” – a reference to a weather balloon, which the Air Force themselves later discredited.

58 years after the Roswell Incident occurred, we continue to lose first-hand witnesses, and the more research that is done on the Incident, the more we realize that accountability for records and documentation has been and continues to be a major problem. When will someone in our government come forward and take the responsibility we expect from our representatives and leaders?

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URL: <http://www.ufoinfo.com/news/balthaser0603.pdf>