

“OPERATION ANVIL”

I joined the forces in March of 1942 and left in 1952. The ten years I spent serving my country were some of the best years of my life.

My father was in the movie business, which meant I had good knowledge about the workings of cameras and photography. For this reason I believe I passed a medical that would not normally allow me in, due to polio as a child.

After my enrollment and training, I was able to use my camera skills and became one of the few dedicated cameramen in the forces. I was sent to many places, and as it was war time I fast learned the ability of filming under difficult circumstances. I will not give more detail on my background, only to say that in the fall of 1944 I was assigned to Intelligence, reporting to the assistant chief of air staff, I was moved around depending on the assignment. During my time I filmed a great deal, including the tests at White Sands (Manhattan Project/Trinity).

I remember very clearly the call to go to White Sands (Roswell). I had not long returned from St. Louis, Missouri, where I had filmed the new ramjet (little Henry).

It was June 1 when McDonald (George C. McDonald, director of the Army Air Force Intelligence Corps) asked me to report to General McMullen (Major General Clements M. McMullen, Deputy Commander of the Strategic Air Command - SAC - in Washington D.C.) for a special assignment. I had had no experience of working with McMullen but after talking to him for a few minutes I knew that I would never wish to be his enemy. McMullen was straight to the point, no messing. I was ordered to a crash site joust south-west of Socorro. It was urgent and my brief was to film everything in sight, not to leave the debris until it had been removed, and I was to have access to all areas of the site, if the commander in charge had a problem with that I was told to get then to call McMullen. I received the same instruction from Tooey (nick-name for General Carl Spaatz, Chief of Staff of the Air Force) saying it was the crash of a Russian spy plane. Two Generals in one day, this job was important.

I flew out from Andrews with sixteen other officers and personnel, mostly medical. We arrived at Wright-Patterson and collected more men and equipment. From there we flew to Roswell on a C54. When we got to Roswell we were transported by road to the site.

When we arrived, the site had already been cordoned off. From the start it was plain to see this was no Russian spy plane, it was a large disc ‘flying saucer’ on its back with heat still radiating from the ground around it.

The commander on site handed over to the SAC medical team who were waiting for Kenney (General George C. Kenney, Commander of the SAC) to arrive. However, nothing had been done as everyone was just waiting for orders.

It was decided to wait until the heat subsided before moving in, as fire was still a significant risk, this was made all the worse by the screams of the freak creatures that were lying by the vehicle. What in God's name they were, no one could tell, but one thing's for sure, they were circus freaks, creatures with no business here. Each had hold of a box which they kept hold of in both arms close to their chests. They just lay there crying, holding those boxes.

Once my tent had been set up I started filming immediately, first the vehicle, the site debris. At around 0600 it was deemed safe to move in. Again the freaks were still crying and when approached screamed even louder. They were protective of their boxes but we managed to get one loose with a firm strike at the head of a freak with the butt of a rifle.

The three freaks were dragged away and secured with rope and tape; the other one was already dead. The medical team were reluctant at first to go near the freaks, but as some were injured, they had no choice. Once the creatures were collected, the priority was to collect all debris that could be removed easily as there was still a risk of fire. This debris seemed to come from exterior struts that were supporting a very small disc on the underside of the craft which must have snapped off when the disc flipped over. (They bore strange hieroglyph-like signs.) The debris was taken to tent stations for logging, then loaded onto trucks.

After three days a full team from Washington came down and the decision was taken to move the craft. Inside it, the atmosphere was very heavy. It was impossible to stay in longer than a few seconds without feeling very sick. Therefore, it was decided to analyze it back at base so it was loaded onto a flat-top and taken to Wright-Patterson, which is where I joined it.

I stayed at Wright-Patterson for a further three weeks working on the debris. I was then told to report to Fort Worth (Dallas, Texas) for the filming of an autopsy. Normally I would not have a problem with this, but it was discovered that the freaks may be a medical threat. Therefore I was required to wear the same protective suits as the doctors. It was impossible to handle the camera properly, loading and focusing were very difficult. In fact against orders I removed my suit during the filming. The first two autopsies took place in July 1947.

After filming I had several hundred reels. I separated the problem reels which required special attention in processing (these I would do later), the first batch was sent through to Washington, and I processed the remainder a few days later. Once the remaining reels had been processed I contacted Washington to arrange collection of the final batch. Incredibly they never came to collect or arrange transportation for them. I called many times, then just gave up. The footage has remained with me ever since.

In May of 1949 I was asked to film a third autopsy."