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**NIDS Investigations of the Flying Triangle Enigma
August 2004**

Summary

The United States is currently experiencing a wave of Flying Triangle sightings that may have intensified in the 1990s, especially towards the latter part of the 1990s. The wave continues. The Flying Triangles are being openly deployed over and near population centers, including in the vicinity of major Interstate Highways. The behavior of these Triangular aircraft does not conform to previous patterns of covert deployment of unacknowledged aircraft. Neither the agenda nor the origin of the Flying Triangles are currently known.

Background

NIDS was abruptly exposed to the Flying Triangle phenomenon on the morning of January 5, 2000 when a police officer called the hotline to report a close encounter with a very large, silent, brightly lit object in western Illinois. Following a high profile investigation by NIDS it emerged that five separate police officers in several different precincts and over a dozen other eyewitnesses had seen the object as it flew slowly in a southwesterly direction.

The flight path of the aircraft took it near the perimeter of Scott Air Force base (SAFB), the Headquarters of Air Mobility Command. One of the NIDS investigators interviewed the AFOSI special agent in charge in his office at SAFB. The upshot of the NIDS interview was a denial from the Air Force of any knowledge of an aircraft in the vicinity of SAFB, as well as a denial that any aircraft had flown out from Scott AFB. A report on the NIDS investigation, including several eyewitness testimonies and summaries can be found at: http://www.nidsci.org/news/illinois_contents.php. (Editors note: this report is no longer available.)

The NIDS report also includes two video clips (reproduced with permission) from an intensive forensic reconstruction of the event by a company that routinely conducts these reconstructions of traffic accidents for presentation in a court of law.

During the ensuing years (2000-2004), NIDS received hundreds of reports from people in the United States and Canada reporting large triangular aircraft, often silent and often flying at very low altitude and at low air speed. In many cases, the objects were brightly lit.

A good example of some structural details of these aircraft comes from an eyewitness in Port Washington, Wisconsin who encountered a large object that flew over her home at 500 feet altitude in October 1998. The witness's husband is a graphics artist, so a graphic reconstruction from the pair shows a football field-sized, wedge-shaped object with flashing red, blue and white "disco lights" (Figures 1-3).



Figure 1. Port Washington Object. Head on perspective.

The eyewitness described several (maybe four, see below) large circles underneath the object as it flew over her. She heard a low hum as it executed a flat bank turn and flew slowly out over Lake Michigan.

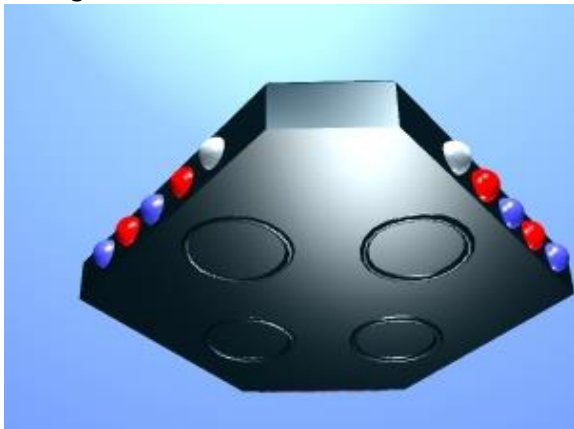


Figure 2. Port Washington Object. Overhead

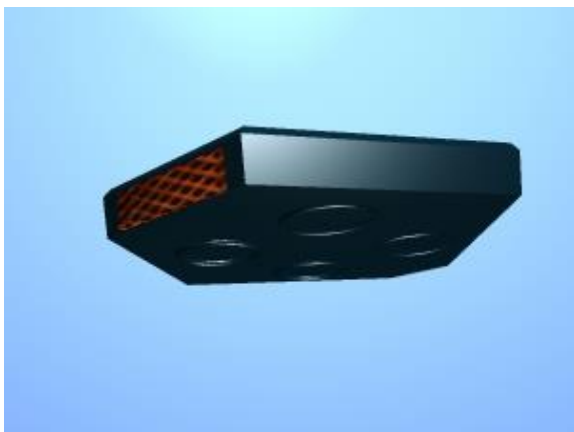


Figure 3 Port Washington Object. Side and Rear View.

The rear of the object appeared to have a reddish or amber colored grill arrangement as shown. The eyewitness from Port Washington describes the circumstances as the aircraft came into her field of view: *“clear starry night; took dog out between 10.31-10.37 PM; was waiting for her to finish...standing*

by our lot-line fence, facing north...just looking at the beautiful night...suddenly this monstrosity came out of the "blue", just like a Star Trek uncloaking, no kidding....so quiet I couldn't believe it and so huge...no more than 500 feet or so up, and big enough to take up my field of sky vision...crude mathematics makes this vessel about 200 ft wide and 250 feet long."

The witness continued:" *"Looked like a Chrysler Corp symbol almost...a pentagonal arrow... sort of a combination of a boomerang/diamond/arrow....it had substantial cabin sitting on top that looked broader with many faceted window type panes. Cabin seemed rather high for the overall thickness of the body of the craft....size of object based in part on the hugeness of the strobing "cop car gumball" banks of lights.*

Behavior of the craft: looked like it was on a dreamy pleasure cruise...very quiet... just a low humming... and strobing bizarre red/clear/blue huge banks of lights. This thing was so psychedelic flashy, I couldn't believe I was standing there alone watching it. I knew it was for real when I saw my dog looked up at it."

The Port Washington sighting is reviewed here along with the Illinois police officer's sighting as an illustration of the behavior of these aircraft. Along with these reports, NIDS has accumulated almost 400 separate sightings of triangular/boomerang/wedge-shaped objects, many of which are brightly lit, low flying, and traveling at unexpectedly low air speeds.

To give a general impression on the noticeably low altitude, Table 1 summarizes some relevant details on altitude from several NIDS reports. We are mindful of the caveat that estimates of altitude, especially at night, are fraught with inaccuracy.

TABLE 1: List of Witness Descriptions of Low Altitudes of Triangular Aircraft

Case#	Location	Description of Altitude
300	Al-Theodore	"Treetop Level"
218	OK-Creek Co	"40 feet"
317	FL-Gainesville	"100' or less"
319	UT-Arcadia	"30 feet"
272	SC-Williamson	"100 feet"
303	IL-Sparta	"Twice treetop height"
048	CA-Death Valley	"50 feet"
050	NY-Bedford	"Just Above Tree-tops"
066	MO-Nelson	"3 story building"
015	OK-Inola	"20 feet"
117	NV-Las Vegas	"50 feet"
523	MI Marquette	"Treetop"
543	TX Lockhart	"~30 feet"
205	OR-Aloha	"8-10 stories"
230	TX-Corpus Christi	"100-150 feet"
231	FL-Newberry	"150', just over trees"
161	MO-Valley Park	"40-50 feet"
330	AL-Wadley	"100' above trees"
385	VA-Lynn Haven	"100 feet"
603	Germany Base	"100-150 feet"
420	NY-Pond Eddy	"100 feet"
450	PA-Waymart	"2 stories"

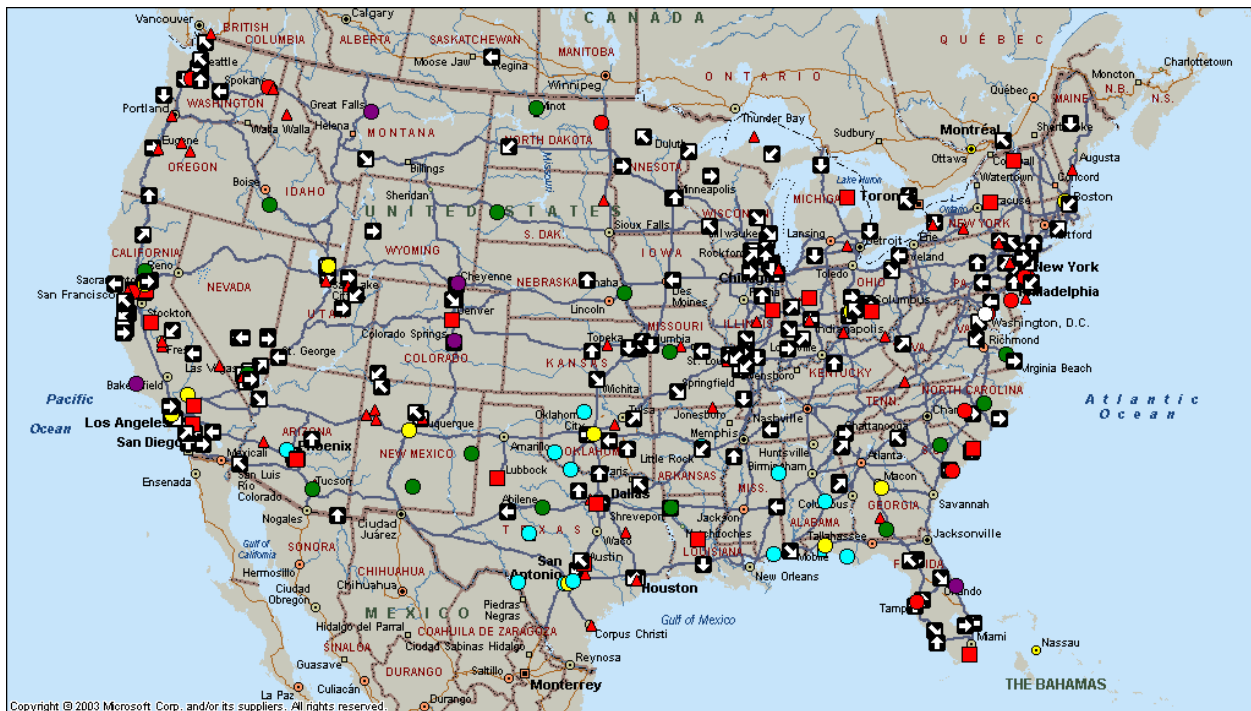
575	OK-Yukon	"Just over trees"
601	NJ-Jersey City	"100 feet"
358	KS-Topeka	"50 feet"
590	IN-Indianapolis	"50 feet above big maple trees"
093	NM Standing Rock	"From Ground"
271	OR	"Ground (nearest)"
092	AZ-Window Rock	"from ground"
156	KS Salina	"on the ground"
278	OR-Eugene	"ground (nearest)"

Results

In earlier reports, NIDS outlined a tentative correlation between reported sightings of Triangles and the locations of Air Mobility Command and Air Force Materiel Command bases in the United States. These reports and hypotheses derived from them can be found in the "Research News" section (<http://www.nidsci.org/researchnews.php>) of the NIDS web site. (Editors note: this report is no longer available.)

Recent Analysis of the NIDS Database

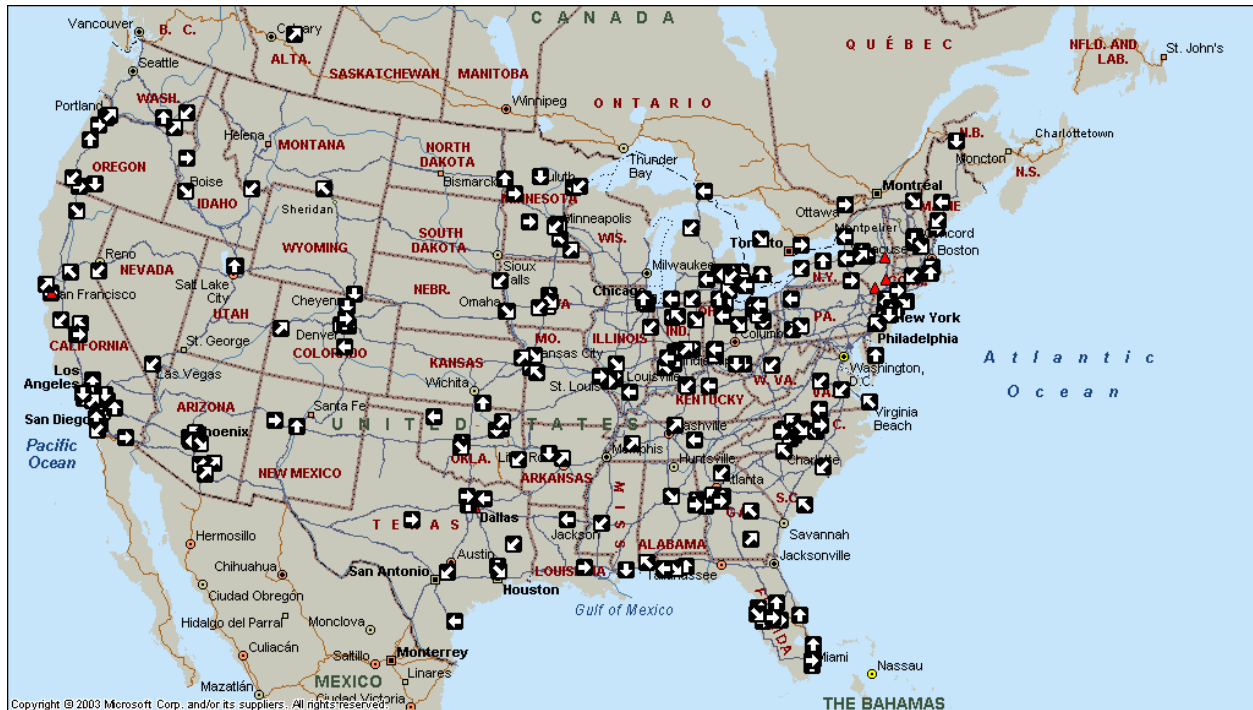
In mid-2004, NIDS again reviewed our database comprising the locations of the Triangle sightings in the United States. We find (see the Map #1) the sightings of Triangles appear primarily adjacent to population centers and along Interstate Highways. From the map, the Triangle sightings cluster on both coasts. The flight path direction of the Triangle aircraft is shown by the direction of the black arrow on the map. If an arrow points west, the Triangle was reported flying west. The results are shown here:



Map #1: Triangle sightings in the NIDS database

The MUFON Triangle Database

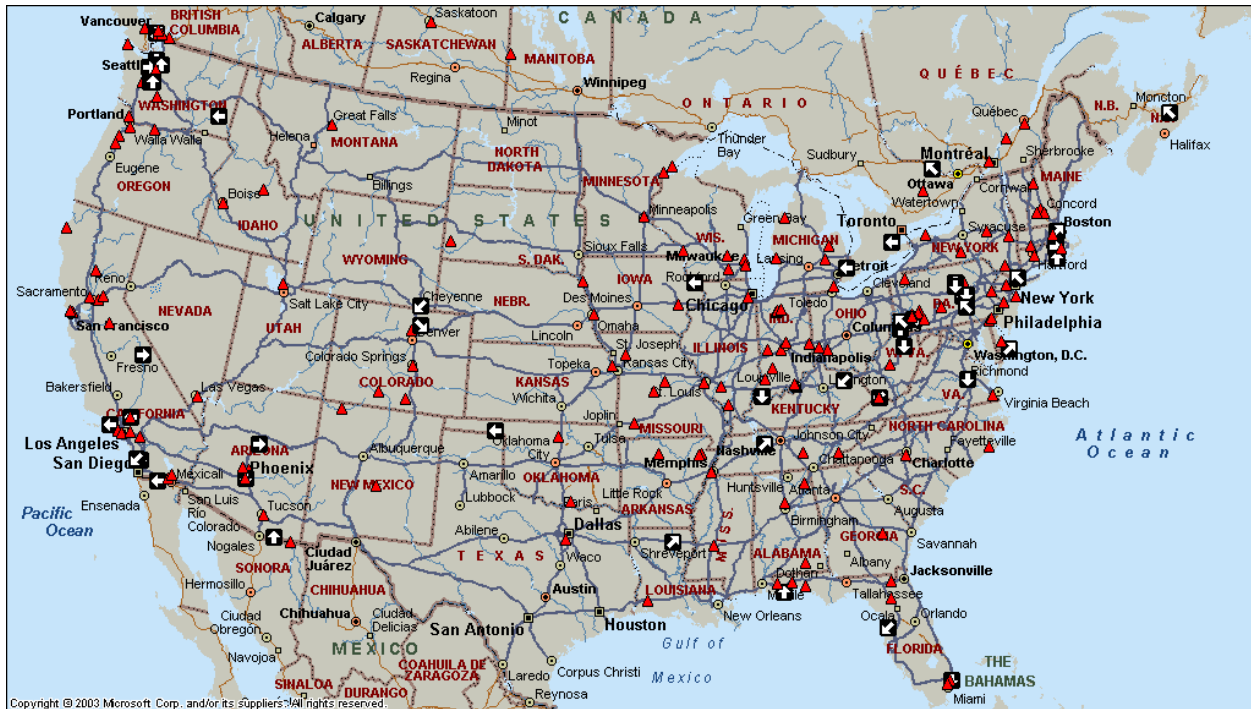
In early 2004, Don Weatherby of MUFON kindly provided NIDS with the MUFON Triangle sightings database. The results of plotting the MUFON data (1990-2003) are shown in Map #2.



Map #2: Triangle sightings in the MUFON database

The Larry Hatch Triangle Database

In early 2004, Larry Hatch, the creator and owner of one of the largest and most comprehensive UFO databases in the world, kindly provided NIDS with his database of Triangle sightings (1990-2003). Larry Hatch's Triangle sightings are plotted on Map#3.



Map #3: Triangle sightings in the Larry Hatch database

Three Databases Mapped

Next, we combined the locations of sightings from all three databases (NIDS, MUFON and Larry Hatch) and plotted more than 700 sightings on a highway map of the USA. Map #4 shows the location of each sighting of a Flying Triangle (denoted by a red Triangle) and the relationship to nearby towns and cities. The circles denote the positions of nearby AFBs. It can be seen that the locations of the AFBs in many cases overlap with populated areas. And many of the Flying Triangle sightings also occur in or near populated areas.



Map 4: Locations of Triangle Sightings, NIDS, MUFON and Hatch databases.

Discussion

The years 1990-2004 have seen an intense wave of Flying Triangle aircraft, as measured by three separate databases. The major finding in this report is that the behavior of the Flying Triangles, as related by hundreds of eyewitnesses, does not appear consistent with the covert deployment of an advanced DoD aircraft. Rather, it is consistent with (a) the routine and open deployment of an (unacknowledged) advanced DoD aircraft or (b) the routine and open deployment of an aircraft owned and operated by non-DoD personnel. The implications of the latter possibility are disturbing, especially during the post 9/11 era when the United States airspace is extremely heavily guarded and monitored. In support of option (a), there is much greater need for surveillance in the United States in the post 9/11 era and it is certainly conceivable that deployment of low altitude surveillance platforms is routine and open. The data from the NIDS, MUFON and NUFORC (see below) Triangle databases show an increase in sightings of Triangles after 1997, so if option (a) is correct, large-scale deployment of the Triangles was initiated over the United States, possibly towards the late 1990s. Whether the deployment of the Flying Triangles is exclusively confined to population centers is unknown, since the majority of the NIDS reports come from cities and from Interstate Highways where people are clustered. NIDS does have some reports of Flying Triangles from remote areas.

Map #4 showing the sightings from all three databases (NIDS, MUFON and Hatch) shows a significant intensity of the Flying Triangle wave in the United States.

There have been other analyses of the Flying Triangle wave in the United States (1) and in the United Kingdom (2). Writers and researchers fall into two camps when analyzing the burgeoning number of Triangle reports. One camp stipulates that the Triangles are man-made; the other says they are not. In 2004 it is extremely difficult to distinguish between these two possibilities since the former option overlaps heavily with legitimate National Security concerns, while in the absence of much more physical evidence, the latter option is not testable. Currently, the dominant data in the field comprise eyewitness sightings. These come with the usual caveats regarding eyewitness reliability.

Analysis of more than 700 Triangle Sightings show that a significant number of the above mentioned eyewitnesses are located near areas of population including major Interstate highways.

The trend of open deployment as described in this report is not consistent with secret operation of an advanced DoD aircraft. For example, crude examination of the (anecdotally derived) patterns of deployment of previously developed DoD stealth aircraft programs, including the F-117 and the B-2 aircraft, show that the pattern of deployment of unacknowledged F-117 and B-2 aircraft, prior to their acknowledgement by DoD, is different from the patterns for the Flying Triangles. Prior to acknowledgement of the F-117 and B-2 aircraft, only rare night time sightings occurred in the sparsely populated sections of Nevada, California and a few other states (see F-117 and B-2 in 12). Flying at low altitude over populated areas was rarely reported for the F-117 or B-2. In contrast, the Flying Triangle deployment, especially during the 1990s, appears more consistent with the open and public operation of these aircraft. In some cases (for example see the above description of the Port Washington Triangle), the deployment may be more consistent with an attempt to display or to be noticed. There appears to be little or no attempt to hide. Hence, the cumulative recent data from several databases lead us to modify the tentative NIDS hypothesis, published in July 2003, that the Triangles are covertly deployed DoD aircraft.

While it is premature to dismiss the previously published NIDS correlation between Triangle sightings and a subset of AFBs, the apparent association with centers of population may point away from a covert program. Rather, it is consistent with routine and open deployment of an advanced aircraft.

Some of the characteristics of the reports of Flying Triangles that are inconsistent with deployment of a covert DoD aircraft include:

- (1) Locations and sightings near cities and on Interstate highways (see Map 4).
- (2) Low altitude in plain sight of eyewitnesses.
- (3) Flying at extremely low speed or hovering in plain sight of eyewitnesses.
- (4) The aircraft sometimes fly with easily noticeable bright lights. Some aircraft have blinding white lights. Others have “bright disco lights”, usually flashing combinations of red, green or blue.

Reports of Flying Triangles in Other Countries

(1) The Belgian Wave of Triangle Sightings

According to one description of the Belgian wave of Flying Triangle sightings (5): “..the Belgian flap began in November of 1989. The events of November 29 would be documented by no less than thirty different groups of witnesses, and three separate groups of police officers. All of the reports related a large object flying at low altitude. The craft was of a flat, triangular shape, with lights underneath. This giant craft made not a sound as it slowly, fearlessly, moved across the landscape of Belgium. There was free sharing of information as the Belgian populace tracked this craft as it moved from the town of Liege to the border of the Netherlands and Germany”. Two F-16s were ordered to intercept and identify this phenomena, and one of the jet's radars locked the object in. It appeared as a small diamond on the pilot's screen. The pilot reported that only a few seconds after locking on the target, the object began to pick up speed, quickly moving out of radar range. An hour-long chase ensued, during which time the F-16s picked up the strange craft's signal two additional times, only to see it fade from view. The triangular craft seemed to be playing a cat and mouse game, and finally was lost in the night lights of Brussels. The pilots of the fighters reported that the UFO had made maneuvers at speeds beyond the capability of their technology, and once the radar showed the craft almost instantly drop from 10,000 to 500 feet in 5 seconds”

From the perspective of this report, the first Belgian Flying Triangle (see Map 5) when plotted on a map also showed that the Triangle Aircraft flew in the proximity of major highways and large cities. This aircraft too was making no attempt at concealment. According to Illobrand von Ludwiger's account of the Belgian Triangle wave (6), “between November 1989 and April 1991, about 3500 UFO sightings were reported in Belgium, some of them witnessed by more than 100 people. Members of the Belgian anomaly investigative group received more than 900 reports in which witnesses observed objects in close proximity (300 meters or less)”. A lucid and descriptive report on the Belgian Flying Triangle wave written by veteran investigator Bob Pratt is also worthy of close study (8).

This first starting sighting would evolve into a wave over the next several months. On two occasions, a pair of F-16 fighters chased the mysterious object, but to no avail. On March 30, 1990, a frantic call to military headquarters came from a Belgian national police Captain. He marveled at a giant Triangle passing over, and simultaneously two ground radar stations were reporting an object of unknown origin on their screens. One of these bases was NATO controlled near the city of least four other stations were also reporting the object on their screens. The object was moving across their screens slowly, and failed to send a transponder signal to identify itself.

“The Belgium wave has obtained classic status in UFO lore. With over 1,000 witnesses, confirmed radar sightings, plane radar lock-ins, and military confirmations, the fact that an unknown craft moved across the country of Belgium cannot be denied. The case is also important for its unique information sharing. Civilian and Military officials were behind the UFO enigma.”



Map 5: The locations of the first Triangle sighting over Belgium in 1989.

(2) British Triangle Sightings

The late Victor Kean amassed an impressive database of Flying Triangle sightings in the United Kingdom. Some of the sightings are detailed in a report by Kean's colleague Omar Fowler (2). More recent sightings compiled by Kean are detailed here (3). Fowler reports (2): “During the period November 1994 until May 1995, fifty-two “Flying Triangle” events were investigated in the Derbyshire area”. Although there have been alleged reports of Flying Triangles that go back into the 1960s, the majority of UK and European Triangle reports appear to come from the late 1980s/1990s. In this respect, The European and UK numbers of Triangle reports appear to agree with those in the NIDS database.

The Percentage of CE3 and CE4 in the Black Triangle Database is no Different from the Percentage in the Entire NIDS UAP Database. What is known about the “occupants” of the Flying Triangles? As noted above (see Table 1), a significant number of the eyewitness reports in the NIDS Flying Triangle database are close encounters (CE). CE is the widely used descriptor for the eyewitness reporting of an object less than 600 feet away. Only a tiny number of eyewitnesses in the NIDS database have reported seeing occupants. CE3 and CE4 are defined by Vallee (4) as the subset of CE reports in which occupants of UAPs are reported. We calculated the numbers of CE3 and CE4 in the NIDS Triangle database. CE3 and CE4 are generally a tiny percentage of all CE and this holds true in the NIDS database. We then compared this with the numbers of CE3 and CE4 in other categories of UAPs, also in the NIDS database. Figure 4 shows that the numbers of CE3 and CE4 reports in most UAP classes are almost the same as the number in the Triangle database. Therefore, we find that the number of CE3 and CE4 reports as a ratio of total Triangle reports conforms to the ratio of CE3+CE4 to total UAP reports.

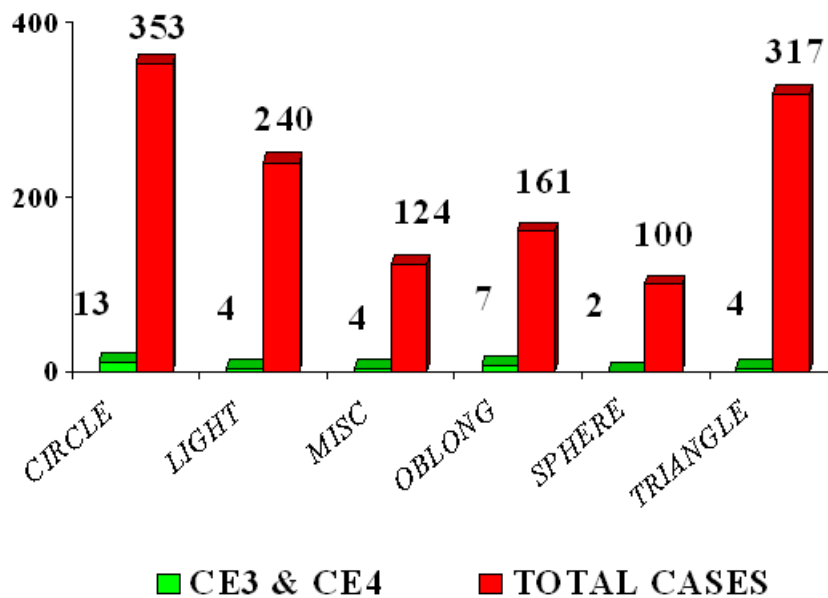


Figure 4: Ratio of CE3/CE4 cases to Total Cases for Triangles and for Other Categories of UAP in the NIDS Database.

The Timing of Boomerang and Triangle Waves

The famous wave of flying boomerang reports in New York and Connecticut was studied by, among others, the distinguished investigators J. Allen Hynek, Philip J Imbrogno and Bob Pratt (7). Pratt's online description (9) of the boomerang wave from 1982-1986 remains one of the most compelling. In those four years, Bob Pratt says, about five thousand people reported seeing the large objects. Pratt writes (9): "Sometimes called the Westchester boomerang because some of the earliest reports came from Westchester County in New York state, it was huge and often flew close to the ground, so low that a grey superstructure could be seen linking numerous multi-colored lights. Numerous sightings were also reported in neighboring New York counties as well as in nearby Connecticut."

It is currently unknown whether the "Westchester Boomerang" sightings of 1982-1986 in New York and Connecticut had any relationship with the more recent, post 1990, wave of Flying Triangle sightings in the United States, documented in the present report.

The NIDS Triangle database by definition is self-selected. The majority of cases have been received in the late 1990s, simply because NIDS opened the hotline in late 1999. NIDS also reviewed the MUFON and Hatch databases and a comparison of the frequencies of Triangle sightings in all three databases is seen in Figure 5. Both NIDS and MUFON Triangle sightings appear to cluster towards the latter part of the 1990s, whereas Larry Hatch's Triangle sightings predominate throughout the early and mid-1990s. Currently, not much is known about data pre-1990 in either the MUFON or Hatch databases, although NIDS has very few Triangle cases pre-1990.

NIDS vs MUFON vs Hatch

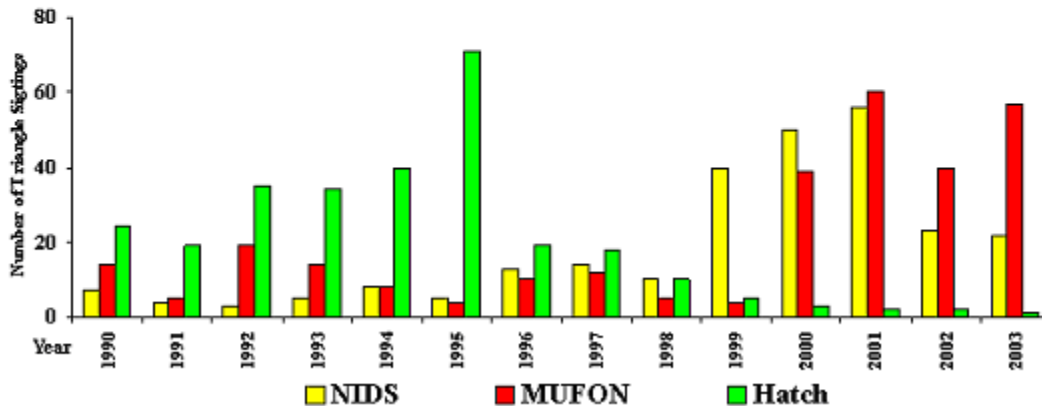


Figure 5. Flying Triangle Reports 1990-2003 in NIDS, MUFON and Hatch Databases

In an effort to look at the overall frequency of Triangle sightings as a function of time, NIDS also consulted the NUFORC database (10) of Triangle sightings. This comprises the largest publicly available database of Triangle sightings. Figure 6 shows the annual frequency of NUFORC Triangle sightings plotted by year since 1980. In Figure 6, the NUFORC data are overlaid with the data in Figure 5 for comparison. Again, the frequency of reported sightings of Triangles in the NUFORC database increases towards the latter part of the 1990s. For temporal comparison the times of the other waves of boomerangs and Triangles in other countries are also shown in Figure 6.

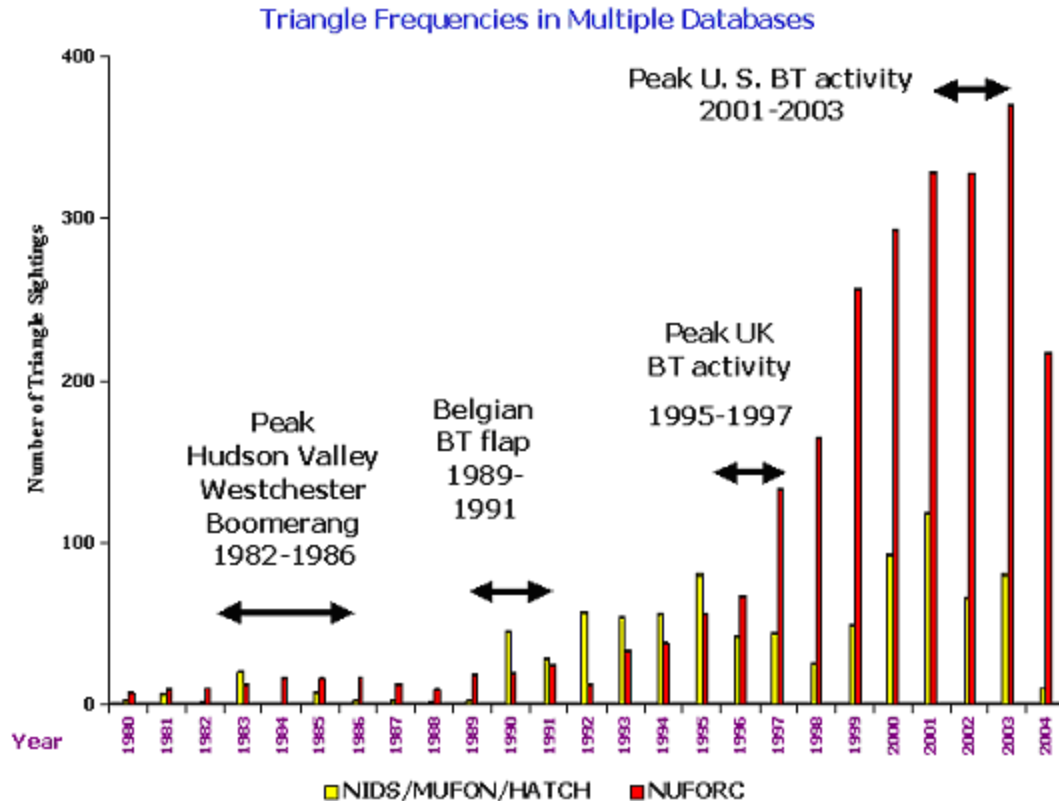


Figure 6: Flying Triangle Frequencies from Multiple Databases as a Function of Time.

It should be stressed that NIDS has control over the NIDS database alone and quality control of cases has been conducted. For example, because it is known that a triangular formation of NOSS satellites (11) regularly flies across the night sky, NIDS generally excludes reports that conform to this description from our database. It is not known whether this exclusion of NOSS-like sightings is done for other databases. Secondly, we are confident that there is little overlap between the NIDS, MUFON and NUFORC databases because we routinely ask eyewitnesses for information on their reports to other organizations.

Acknowledgements

NIDS thanks Don Weatherby, John Schuessler, Larry Hatch, Roger Pinson and Bruce Cornet for their contributions to this report. We also appreciate the online presence of the NUFORC database, run ably by Peter Davenport.

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