[redacted] Incident #163

ATIC NO. ---- DATE OF INFO 21 July 1943

AF NO. ---- LOCATION Van Nuys, Calif.

REPORT NO. ---- SOURCE Ord. Reserve Officer

DATE OF REPORT ---- DATE IN TO ATIC ----

TIME OF OBSERVATION Hour before dark COLOR Bluish luminescence like flourescent lamp which gradually changed to orange color at dusk

SHAPE Round tending to spherical SPEED ---

SIZE Of weather balloon at 2,000' ALTITUDE Great height

COURSE E to W LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED About an hour

NO. IN GROUP 1 TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground

BOMBS ---- MANEUVERS Traveled a vertical arc of about 25° or more.

PHOTOS ---- SKETCHES ----

Temporary ATIC Form 329
(2 Jan 52)

Barcoon

[redacted]

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #163 -- VanNuys, California -- 21 July 1948

Since a complete description of this incident is given in numerous reports from Mt. Wilson Observatory and Griffith Planetarium, since the observations there were made with telescopes by experienced observers, and since their descriptions agree that the object was in all respects balloon-like, there is nothing that this investigator can add. The object was evidently an unidentified balloon.

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

Dr HYNEK'S EVALUATIONS EXTRACTED FROM PROJECT GRUDGE REPORT.

INCIDENT INDEX

1. Astronomical

a. High probability:
#26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 48, 49, 59, 60, 66, 69, 70, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 104, 116, 119, 132, 136, 140, 147, 148, 158, 174, 184, 185, 187, 197, 203, 204, 208, 216, 219, 238.

b. Fair or low probability:
#19, 20, 23, 24, 28, 35, 36, 46, 50, 63, 67, 80, 82, 93, 100, 112, 120, 121, 129, 130, 144, 153, 165, 166, 167, 175, 192, 199, 202, 205, 220, 230, 240.

2. Non-astronomical but suggestive of other explanations

a. Balloons or ordinary aircraft:
#3, 11, 22, 41, 42, 53, 54, 73, 81, 83, 91, 92, 113, 114, 115, 126, 131, 138, 141, 145, 155, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 163, 169, 171, 173, 178, 180, 182, 188, 190, 194, 195, 196, 198, 200, 201, 209, 210, 217, 222, 235, 237, 239.

b. Rockets, flares or falling bodies:
#4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25, 56, 65, 78, 106, 107, 108, 109, 133, 170, 211, 218.

c. Miscellaneous (reflections, auroral streamers, birds, etc.):
#39, 89, 123, 124, 128, 146, 164, 181, 189, 214, 221, 231, 234.

3. Non-astronomical, with no explanation evident

a. Lack of evidence precludes explanation:
#38, 44, 45, 47, 55, 57, 72, 86, 87, 88, 90, 99, 110, 117, 118, 125, 127, 137, 139, 149, 150, 177, 179, 191, 206, 212, 213, 229, 232, 233.

b. Evidence offered suggests no explanation:
#1, 2, 10, 17, 21, 29, 37, 40, 51, 52, 58, 61, 62, 64, 68, 71, 75, 76, 77, 79, 84, 105, 111, 122, 135, 151, 152, 154, 162, 168, 172, 176, 183, 186, 193, 207, 215, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 236, 241, 242, 243, 244, 134.

The following article taken from the Los Angeles Times
Thursday Morning, July 22, 1948

Silver Sphere Deflated as Sky Mystery

It was almost like with the [illegible]
[illegible] again.
The queries started yesterday afternoon among Big Bear [illegible] residents.
What is that [illegible]
[illegible] following the [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] curiosity [illegible]
[illegible] Sheriff's [illegible]
[illegible]
An [illegible] was [illegible]
[illegible] silver [illegible]
tracked by thousands of [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
direction.

Aerial Visitor Identified

At Mt. Wilson Dr. Robert S. [illegible] solar observer, reported that he had examined the object as it passed nearly overhead on its leisurely course. Next was George Abell, Caltech. Observatory astronomer, also reported following the sphere by telescope.

Their consensus, borne out by the Weather Bureau forecast center at Los Angeles Airport:

A meteorological balloon.

These balloons are supposed to burst at high elevations after automatically broadcasting weather information during their ascent. One apparently developed a slow leak and sank back to [illegible]

A general examination of the balloon's movement over Los Angeles [illegible] to [illegible] Aviation Authority [illegible] Air Force [illegible] control [illegible]

HEADQUARTERS
AIR MATERIEL COMMAND
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio

MCIAXO-3/ERS/ra
Jan 5 1949

MCIAXO

SUBJECT: Project "SIGN"

TO: Chief, Air Weather Service,
Andrews Air Force Base,
Washington 25, D. C.
ATTN: DSS

1. Project "SIGN" is responsible for the collection, investigation and interpretation of data relative to sighting of unidentified flying objects. Attached Incident Summaries 1 thru 172 from the files of Project "SIGN" are forwarded for study and recommendations as to which of the incidents may be eliminated as balloons released on routine synoptic ascents by the Air Weather Service, the Navy Aerological Service or the United States Weather Bureau. The summaries attached may be retained in your headquarters for working and reference purposes.

2. The Air Weather Service is the only agency of its type that has been asked to assist in the accomplishment of Project "SIGN" except that the United States Weather Bureau has provided information on ball lightning. Research projects in which balloons are used and which are conducted or sponsored by the Army, Navy or United States Air Force are checked by the Intelligence Department of this Command. These checks areusually made direct from the Project "SIGN" Office, MCIAXO-3. These checks are distinct from the check of synoptic balloon flights made by weather service stations of the Air Force, the Navy and the Department of Commerce. (U. S. Weather Bureau) requested of Air Weather Service.

3. It is the opinion of this office that the below listed incidents are those having the greatest possibility of being balloons. This list does not eliminate the possibility that many of the remaining incidents are balloons.

2	24	50	91	113	155
3	25	52	92	115	156
4	28	72	96	126	157
11	30	73	104	141	159
14	31	81	105	148	163
16	32	87	107,8,9	151	167
22	33	89	112(See122)	154	169
23	43				

F-41451-A

Hq AMC, Chief, Air Weather Service, Washington 25, D. C.
Subj: Project "SIGN"

4. The form used in interrogating witnesses to sightings is inclosed as a matter of interest. Comment as to possible improvement of the "Essential Elements of Information" in regard to routine synoptic balloon flights is invited.

5. It is requested that correspondence be forwarded to the Commanding General, Headquarters, Air Materiel Command, attention MCIAXO-3.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

/s/ W. R. Clingerman, Col, USAF
for H. M. McCOY
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Intelligence Dept

2 Incls:
Summaries 1-172 incl
"SEI"

Copies furnished:

AFOIR, Hq. USAF
Capt Trakowski, Geophysics Lab
Major Kodis, MCREEP
Colonel Neal, MCLAWS

APPENDIX F

3(105) Electronics Station

Analysis of Project Orange Reports

AIR MATERIEL COMMAND
3160 Electronics Station
Cambridge Field Station
230 Albany Street
Cambridge 39, Mass.

ACT/Bs

000.92
In reply address both communication and envelope to the Commanding Officer and attention of following office symbol. ERH

April 18, 1949

SUBJECT: Analysis of Project "Grudge" Reported Incidents

TO: Commanding General
Air Materiel Command
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio
ATTN: MCIAKO

1. Reference is made to the letters from your Headquarters to this station of 22 November 1948, 6 December 1948, and 14 January 1949, Subjects: "Project 'Sign' ", requesting that reported incidents 1 through 172 be analyzed to determine whether or not these might have been caused by balloons launched by these laboratories.

2. A listing has been compiled of all balloons launched by these laboratories and its contractors for special atmospheric research purposes, from the first such launching to No. 101 on 17 November 1948. Each of these launchings has been compared with the reported incidents 1 through 172. Factors of comparison were date of launching and date of recovery with respect to date of reported incidents; place of launching and place of recovery with respect to the place of reported incidents, and possible deviations from the known flight path with respect to the place of reported incidents. So that your office may make an independent analysis, three copies of the launching list are inclosed.

a. Incidents No. 5 through No. 16 reported on 4 July 1947 throughout Oregon, Idaho and Washington gave, in general, descriptions of clusters or groups of objects. The 3 July 1947 balloon launching No. 8 at Alamogordo was a cluster of balloons and was not recovered, and so might be suspected of being the cause of these reports. However, although not recovered, this flight was terminated in the New Mexico Tularosa Valley only a few miles northwest of Alamogordo. That the balloons were downed was determined both by airplane spotting and by radio direction finding upon the balloon telemetering instruments. Recovery of the balloons and instruments was prevented by the impassability of the terrain.

b. Balloon release No. 11 of 7 July 1947 could compare with respect to date with incident No. 1 through No. 4, and again with incident No. 40. This balloon flight was again a cluster.

S-34560

The description of incident No. 40 is inconsistent with the appearance of balloon flight No. 11. Also, in consideration of the prevailing upper winds, it is very unlikely that the balloons would have gone more than a few miles westward of Alamogordo, although it must be admitted that a long flight west of the launching point could not be ruled out as impossible.

c. Incident No. 47 compares somewhat in time with balloon Launching No. 10 of 5 July 1947. However, balloon No. 10 although not recovered was known to have been downed northeast of Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was not recovered due to impassability of terrain. Incident No. 113 is a reasonable description of the 20 ft. plastic balloon and instruments used by these Laboratories. This incident was on the date of balloon release No. 46 of 9 April 1948 at Alamogordo. However, the time of the reported incident (1506 CST) is about 1/2 hour before the time of balloon release (1432 MST), thus the incident could not have been that balloon.

d. It is of interest to note that incident No. 122 was reported by an employee of these Laboratories who had considerable experience in the use of balloons of all kinds, and could have been depended upon to know the appearance and behavior of a balloon if it was this he saw.

e. Incident No. 163 bears a fair description of the appearance of a large plastic balloon in sunset light. The object's disappearance could be accounted for either by its movement into the earth's sunset shadow or by natural defocusing of the observer's eyes. This incident could possibly have been balloon release No. 75 or No. 76 or 20 and 21 July 48 from Alamogordo. Balloon No. 75 was recovered at Hollister, California, which is in the Monterey Bay area, on 22 July 1948 and could have easily had a trajectory which would have been within sight of the Los Angeles area. Balloon No. 76 was never recovered. It is possible that it had a trajectory similar to No. 75.

f. All other reported incidents from 1 to 172 do not seem to have reasonable comparison with balloons launched by these Laboratories.

3. The balloons used by these Laboratories are now somewhat standardized. They are 20 feet long, plastic, white in color, and hem sphere-on-cone in shape. Nearly all launchings are made at the Holloman AFB at Alamogordo, New Mexico. Two photograph prints are inclosed showing the appearance and size of these balloons. The larger photograph shows the typical flight appearance at any altitudes where it would be visible. It is hoped that this information may be of some use to you in identifying future reports of incidents.

4. It is believed that certain of the items in the questionnaire "Checklist-Unidentified Flying Objects" produce insignificant and unreliable data from an observer. These are: 9. Distance of object from observer; 11. Altitude; 12. Speed; and 16. Size. For any unfamiliar object beyond the focal range of the human eyes (about 60 ft.), these four factors are mutually inter-dependent and therefore indeterminant unless at least one of them (and some observed angles) are known. Directly asking an observer about these indeterminants not only gets unreliable data but induces wild answers because the observer is led into making a statement about quantities for which he has no basis in fact. He will unconsciously assume knowledge of some one of these factors and so give incorrect information on all. That people (many of whom should know better) will arbitrarily give answers to two significant figures on these questions, which really cannot be answered at all, is proof of the unreliability of their information.

5. It is suggested that these four items on the questionnaire be replaced by questions which will yield answers possible of being independent facts in terms of the observer's best estimates of angles and time. From such data given by observers of the same object at two different places, a reliable calculated estimate could be made of the object's size, altitude, speed and path. These data should include:

a. An estimate of the angular size of the object. A quick but reasonable estimate can be made by comparing the angle subtended by the index finger held at arms length. The finger (7/8" wide) of an average man held at 26" to 30" (arms length) will subtend an angle of approximately two degrees. In this way angular size from about 1/2° to about 8° can be estimated.

b. The range of the object's flight in terms of the angle subtended by the observed path. If the object moves in a reasonably straight course it is important to observe the position at the beginning and the end of its course. After the flight has been completed a person can extend his arms toward the two points and also at 90° or 180° and by comparison estimate the angular extent of the flight. It is also important that information which will determine those directions relative to a compass point be given. If the angular course is associated with objects on the horizon, with roads, with the sun (if the time of day is also noted) or by the north star, the orientation can be rechecked at any later time.

c. The time required for the object to traverse the observed course. This is probably the most difficult estimate to make. Timing with a watch is the most satisfactory, but an observer is seldom prepared to do so. Seconds can be counted with good accuracy by saying,

"one flying saucer; two flying saucers, three flying saucers" ---etc. At a normal speaking speed. On the other hand it is not easy to count seconds and at the same time make all the other desirable observations. It must be remembered that when a person is excited his estimates of time are apt to be rather inaccurate.

d. Estimation of the elevation angle of the object. Almost all persons will overestimate elevation angles. This tendency can be reduced by the observer extending one arm vertically and the other horizontally to observe a 90° angle. The vertical arm can then be lowered to point to the observed object. In this way the observed angle can be compared with a 90° angle and a more accurate estimate obtained.

6. It is realized that it might not be possible for an observer to perform the opeations suggested in the preceding paragraph, during the period the object is sighted. If he would immediately reconsider what he saw and then estimate such measurements, he should be able to give quantitative answers accurate to at least 25%. In interrogating observers, they should also be asked to reconstruct their observations and then estimate these same factors. It is suggested that instructions for making such quick and estimated observations be given to weather observers, control tower operators, civil police, forest and fire rangers, and other such people who might have good chance of seeing unidentified flying objects. If any information concerning unidentified flying objects is given to the public, instructions for reliable observation should be included.

7. This organization will be pleased to be of any further assistance required in connection with this matter.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

3 Incls
1. List of balloons launched (in trip)
2. 8" X 10" photo print of plastic balloon
3. 4" X 5" photo print of plastic balloon

/s/ A. C. Trakowski, Jr.
A. C. TRAKOWSKI, JR.
Captain, USAF
Director, Base Directorate for Geophysical Research

CHECK-LIST - UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Incident # 163

1. Date 21 22 July 48
2. Time hour before dark
3. Location Van Nuys, Calif
4. Name of observer Capt H[redacted]r & wife (Ord-Res)
5. Occupation of observer Ordnance Reserve Officer
6. Address of observer [redacted]ol Ave., Canoga Park, Calif
7. Place of observation Van Nuys, Calif.
8. Number of objects 1
9. Distance of object from observer ~~2000 ft~~ overhead
10. Time in sight ~~N/S~~ about an hour
11. Altitude great height
12. Speed N/S
13. Direction of flight toward the sun from the East or ~~W to E~~ E to W
14. Tactics traveled a vertical arc of about 25° or more
15. Sound N/S
16. Size of weather balloon at 2000 ft
17. Color bluish luminescence like fluorescent lamp which gradually changed to orange color at dusk
18. Shape round tending to spherical
19. Odor detected N/S
20. Apparent construction N/S
21. Exhaust trails N/S
22. Weather conditions CAVU ground temperature 70-75°
23. Effect on clouds N/S
24. Sketches or photographs None
25. Manner of disappearance snapped off like a lamp when you throw switch
26. Remarks: (Over)

Object appeared round and probably spherical. At first looked similar to weather balloon at about 2000 ft but there was no characteristic bobbing. The wind was blowing on the ground with fair strength and gusty yet the object was quite steady. In the time it was under observation (about an hour) it traveled thru a vertical arc of about 25° or more. After watching the object for a while the observer concluded that whatever it was the thing was at great height but not a star. It had a bluish luminescence like a fluorescent lamp and as the sun set the color gradually changed to an orange color at dusk and finally snapped off like a lamp when the switch is thrown. The outline was clear and sharp and symetrical (no fuzziness or blurring), the air clear with visibility unlimited. Direction of travel from East directly toward the sun.

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]
[redacted]
Canoga Park, Calif.

G-2
Air Materiel Command
Wright Field, Ohio

13 Aug 48

Gentlemen:

REPORT OF STRANGE OBJECT IN FLIGHT

On the evening of 22 July 48 my wife and I were having dinner in the patio of an open air market in Van Nuys, California. We arrived there about an hour before dark. Our attention was attracted by other patrons to a strange object in the sky almost directly overhead.

Description. It appeared to be round and probably spherical. At first it appeared to be a weather balloon at about 2000 feet but there was none of the characteristic bobbing. The wind was blowing on the ground in fair strength and gusty yet the object was quite steady. After watching it a while I concluded that whatever it was was at great height but not a star. It had a bluish luminescence like a fluorescent lamp and as the sun set the color gradually changed to an orange color at dusk and finally snapped off like a lamp when you throw the switch (at which moment I was looking right at it). In about an hour that I had been observing it, the object had traveled through a vertical arc of about 25 degrees or more. The outline of the object was clear and sharp and symetrical (no fuzziness or bluring); the air was very clear with visibility unlimited; ground temperature about 70-75 degrees dropping to about 60 degrees an hour after dark (two hour time lapse); direction of travel was from East directly toward the sun.

Very truly yours,

[redacted]
Capt. Ord-Res
[redacted]

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

Hq AMC Form No. 10-514 (Rev 20 Feb 48)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WF-L-25 MAR 48 150M

UNCLASSIFIED

IN REPLY ADDRESS BOTH COMMUNICATION AND ENVELOPE TO COMMANDING GENERAL, AIR MATERIEL COMMAND, ATTENTION FOLLOWING OFFICE SYMBOL:

MCIAXO-3

HEADQUARTERS
AIR MATERIEL COMMAND
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE
DAYTON, OHIO

MCIAXO-3/HWS/aw

8 September 1948

SUBJECT: Project "SIGN"

TO: Chief
Los Angeles Procurement Field Office
1206 Santee St
Box J 849, Terminal Annex
Los Angeles 54, California
ATTN: Mr. William G. Sproull

1. This Command is currently engaged in an intelligence investigation of all reported sightings of unidentified aerial phenomena.

2. Reference is made to inclosed letter from [redacted] Variel Ave., Canoga Park, California, to Air Materiel Command, 13 Aug 1948, concerning an object observed in Van Nuys, California.

3. It is requested that Mr. [redacted] be interviewed and that a signed graphic statement be obtained. This statement should indicate the following salient factors: location, date and time of sighting, weather conditions at the time, names, occupations and addresses of witnesses, photographs or sketches, construction, number, shape, size, color, speed, in what part of the sky first observed, direction, manner of disappearance, maneuverability (tactics), altitude, sound, exhaust trail, odor, effect on clouds, diagram of flight pattern (if any), whether luminous or incandescent or if the object(s) appeared to be carrying lights.

4. In connection with this investigation, request that

a. Local teletype sequence of weather conditions and the Winds Aloft Report at the time of the sighting be obtained.

b. Local flight schedules of commercial and military aircraft flying in the vicinity at the time be checked.

c. Possible releases of testing devices sent aloft by Ordnance, Navy, Army, Air Forces, Weather Bureau, Research Organizations, or any other, in the vicinity, be investigated.

5. It is requested that personnel be convinced of the necessity of avoiding publicity in relation to this investigation and that it be considered "Confidential".

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS.
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

AMC
Subject: Project "SIGN"

6. All material will be forwarded directly to Commanding General, Hq, AMC, Wright-Patterson AF Base, Dayton, Ohio, attention: MCI, in accordance with USAF letter dated 26 February 1948.

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL McNARNEY:

James J. Bausman
for W. R. CLINGERMAN
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Technical Intelligence Division
Intelligence Department

1 Incl:
1. Cy ltr dtd 13 Aug 48

Subj: Project "SIGN"
(Basic ltr dtd 8 Sep 48)

1st Ind. D05FOSI/REV:mb

Sub-District 5F OSI, (IG), Western District AF PFO, P. O. Box 3849, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles 54, California, 30 September 1948

TO: Commanding General, Air Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. ATTENTION: MCIAKO-3

1. Report of investigation transmitted herewith.

2. Request this office be advised whether further investigation is desired in this case.

R. E. Voshell
R. E. VOSHELL
Acting Chief
Sub-District Office 5F

Incl:
Cy ltr dtd 13 Aug 48 withdrawn 30 Sep
Report dtd 29 Sep 48 (Dupl) added

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DOD DIR 5200.10

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24-4 163

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS REPORT OF INVESTIGATION	SAC NO. 24-2 DATE 30 September 1948
	REPORT MADE BY Special Agent WILLIAM G. SPROULL
TITLE PROJECT "SIGN" UNIDENTIFIED AERIAL OBJECT	REPORT MADE AT DO5F, Western District AF Procurement Field Office PERIOD 17, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28 September 1948 OFFICE OF ORIGIN DO5F, Western District AF Procurement Field Office STATUS CLOSED
CHARACTER SPECIAL INQUIRY	
REFERENCE None, this is an initial report	

SYNOPSIS

Investigation requested by Commanding General, Air Materiel Command. Aerial object sighted in sky 21 July 1948, was viewed by qualified astronomical observers, through 3", 6" and 12" telescopes at Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles, California, and Mount Wilson Observatory, Pasadena, California. Aerial object described as a ribbed, pear-shaped balloon of latex color, with bright rectangular disk suspended from lower portion of balloon. Diameter of balloon approximately twenty-five (25) feet.

DISTRIBUTION	ACTION COPY FORWARDED TO	FILE STAMP
OSI, Hq. 2 CG, AMC(MCIAXO-3) 2 File 2	CG, AMC (MCIAXO-3)	

APPROVED

R. L. VOSHELL
Acting
Sub-DISTRICT COMMANDER

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

AFCSI FORM 4
23 JULY 1948

9-1073, AF

CONFIDENTIAL
UNCLASSIFIED

DETAILS:

1. This investigation was requested by the Commanding General, Air Materiel Command, through COLONEL W. R. CLINGERMAN, Chief, Technical Intelligence Division, Intelligence Department, Air Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, per letter dated 8 September 1948, Symbol MCIAMD-3. Letter contained report of sighting unidentified aerial object over Van Nuys, California, 22 July 1948, by MR. [redacted] Variel Avenue, Canoga Park, California, and requested attempt be made by this office to identify the object.

2. On 17 September 1948, MR. [redacted], Power Consultant, of 8531 Variel Avenue, Canoga Park, California, was interviewed regarding sighting of unidentified aerial object on 22 July 1948. MR. [redacted] referred to the letter of 13 August 1948 which he addressed to Air Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio, offering description of object in question. His statement was substantially the same. MR. [redacted]'S additional remarks, based on interrogation by this agent, is included in a signed statement which is attached to this report as Exhibit I. MR. [redacted]'S impression of the object in question is that the object was spherical in shape and reflected a bluish color luminescence, such as a floresecent lamp.

3. On 17 September 1948, MRS. [redacted], housewife, [redacted] Avenue, Canoga Park, California, was interviewed regarding sighting of aerial object over Van Nuys, California, on 22 July 1948. MRS. [redacted]'S statement is substantially the same as MR. [redacted]'S. A signed statement is attached to this report as Exhibit II. Her impression of the object in question was that object appeared to be spherical in shape, metallic in substance, reflecting the colors of yellow and orange and deeper hues such as purple.

AGENTS NOTES: MR. and MRS. [redacted] both stated the object in question was sighted on 22 July 1948. However, during the course of the interrogation, it was revealed by both MR. and MRS. [redacted] that it was on a Wednesday evening that the object was observed. The date, therefore, would have correctly been 21 July 1948 that the object was observed instead of 22 July 1948.

4. On 21 September 1948, DR. [redacted], Solar Observer, Mount Wilson Observatory, Pasadena, California; home address, [redacted] Avenue, Pasadena, California, was interviewed. DR. [redacted]ON was interrogated concerning his observation of unidentified aerial object which he observed through a 3" and 6" telescope at Mount Wilson Observatory between hours of 1900 and 2030 on 21 July 1948. DR. [redacted] described the object in question as consisting of a thin translucent outer envelope enclosing a sphere at the top; the whole of the object having the shape of a pear and beneath the pear-shaped assembly, a square yellow disk was attached by cords. A signed statement was obtained from DR. [redacted] giving all pertinent Data and is attached to this report as Exhibit III. DR. [redacted]ON stated that the information which was released to the Los Angeles newspapers in regard to the object in question was released by an assistant at Mount Wilson Observatory. The information released was erroneous and was given on snap judgment. DR. [redacted] pointed out that he overheard the assistant talking to the newspaperman on the telephone and heard the assistant state to the newsman that the

[redacted]
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED

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that the object was a weather balloon and that at that time, he ([redacted] told the assistant that he should not have made such a statement to the newspapers. However, no attempts were made to change the information given to the newspapers, as there was no proof that the object was not a weather balloon.

5. On 22 September 1948, MR. [redacted], Griffith Observatory attache, Los Angeles, California, was interviewed. MR. [redacted] stated that he was on duty at Griffith Observatory on the evening of 21 July 1948 and that he was handling the telephone switchboard; further that he did not observe the object in question as reported by the Los Angeles Times newspaper on 22 July 1948. But that instead, he informed the newspaper on the evening of 21 July 1948, when the newspaper called the Griffith Observatory to obtain information regarding the sighting of unidentified aerial object, that the object was a meteorological balloon. MR. [redacted] stated that this was the impression he had obtained from various people at the Observatory, being that the object was a meteorological balloon, thus his report to the Los Angeles Times.

6. On 23 September 1948, MR. [redacted]S, Telescope Demonstrator, Griffith Park Observatory; home address, [redacted] Avenue, Los Angeles, California, was interviewed regarding his observation of aerial object sighted on 21 July 1948. MR. [redacted] stated that he observed the object with a 12" refracting telescope and that the object was pear-shaped, appeared to be ribbed vertically, apparently composed of some sort of translucent material such as fibre glass and suspended from the body of the object was a rectangular metallic appearing disk, gold in color, and suspended from the disk was a length of cord or cable. The object was approximately 20 to 25 feet in diameter. A signed statement was obtained from MR. [redacted] by this agent, outlining in detail MR. [redacted] observation of object in question. This statement is attached to this report as Exhibit IV. MR. [redacted] submitted a rough sketch of the object in question. This sketch is being enclosed to the requester with its copies of this report. MR. [redacted] indicated that his impression was that the object in question was not a meteorological balloon and that MR. ABELL wrongly informed the newspapers. MR. [redacted] further stated that the geographic co-ordinates of the Griffith Observatory are as follows:

LATITUDE - 34° 6' 46.8" North
LONGITUDE - 118° 18' 5.5" West
ELEVATION - 1140' above sea level

7. On 23 September 1948, MR. [redacted], Supervisor of charts, Los Angeles Weather Bureau, Los Angeles Airport, Los Angeles, California, was interviewed regarding reproduction of Winds Aloft Charts and pertinent data for the date 21 July 1948. MR. [redacted] furnished this agent with the 1300 hours and 1900 hours meteorological soundings for the date 21 July 1948, taken by the Los Angeles Weather Bureau. MR. [redacted] was questioned as to his knowledge of appearance and relative data concerning meteorological balloons. MR. [redacted] stated that there are two types of balloons currently used by weather stations in computing weather data. These balloons being the Rarex balloon and a balloon manufactured by the Air Cruiser Corporation. Neither balloon would aptly fit the description of the object described by persons previously interviewed. MR. [redacted] stated that the average meteorological balloon was 6' in diameter at point of release and that the balloon, when at a 20,000 feet altitude,

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would be approximately 10' to 12' in diameter and at 60,000 to 72,000 feet altitude, would be 18' in diameter and was designed to burst at this point and the instruments which were attached to the sounding device parachute to earth. MR. [redacted] checked all files of his office pertaining to releases of balloons in the greater Los Angeles area, but could find no record of a balloon other than ordinary meteorological balloons being released by any weather station, including Air Force and Navy installations in the area. MR. [redacted] further pointed out that the time of official sunset on 21 July 1948 was at 1902 hours and that there would be approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes of twilight remaining after sunset. Winds Aleft Charts obtained from MR. [redacted] are enclosed to the requester with its copies of this report. Clippings from Los Angeles newspapers with respect to the object are enclosed to the requester with its copies of this report.

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DOD DIR [illegible]

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FNCID. #163

STATEMENT UNCLASSIFIED

Statement made by Mr. [redacted]er, Power Consultant, Department of Water and Power, Van Nuys, California; home address, [redacted]venue, Conoga Park, California. 1230 hours, 17 September 1948, concerning object sighted in the sky, 22 July 1948, in the vicinity of San Fernando Valley, California:

"On the evening of 22 July 1948, between the hours of 1930 and 2030, my wife and I were having dinner in the patio of an open air market in Van Nuys, California. We arrived there about an hour before dark. Our attention was attracted by other patrons to a strange object in the sky almost directly overhead.

DESCRIPTION: It appeared to be round and probably spherical. At first, it appeared to be a weather balloon at about 2000 feet but there was none of the characteristic bobbing. The wind was blowing on the ground in fair strength and gusty yet the object was quite steady. After watching it a while, I concluded that whatever it was, was at great height but not a star. It had a bluish luminescence like a fluorescent lamp and as the sun set the color gradually changed to an orange color at dusk and finally snapped off like a lamp when you throw the switch (at which moment I was looking right at it). In about an hour that I had been observing it, the object had traveled through a vertical arc of about 25 degrees or more. The outline of the object was clear and sharp and symetrical (no fuzziness or bluring); the air was very clear with visibility unlimited; ground temperature about 70-75 degrees dropping to about 66 degrees an hour after dark (two hour time lapse); direction of travel was from East directly toward the sun.

ADDITIONAL INTERROGATION BY SPECIAL AGENT WILLIAM G. SPROULL

MR. SPROULL: Can you approximate the geographical location when you first sighted the object?

MR. [redacted]: Directly over Van Nuys, about 25 or 30 degrees it travelled.

MR. SPROULL: Approximately what was the time when you first sighted this object?

MR. [redacted]: I didn't know the exact hour, but it was about an hour before sundown.

MR. SPROULL: Who called your attention to the object?

MR. [redacted]: Unidentified member of a group at the patio.

MR. SPROULL: What was the weather condition at the time?

MR. [redacted] Very clear sky. Visibility unlimited.

MR. SPROULL: What was your impression of the actual shape or dimension of the object?

MR. [redacted] It appeared to be round with no definite construction.

[redacted]

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INCID. #163

MR. SPROULL: What was the approximate size of the object?

MR. [redacted]: The size, as near as I could judge, would be a weather balloon at 2,000 feet. I am POSITIVE it was not a weather balloon.

MR. SPROULL: What would you approximate as the speed?

MR. [redacted]: That I wouldn't know except that it travelled about 25 or 30 degrees at approximately forty-five minites to an hour.

MR. SPROULL: In what direction did it move?

MR. [redacted]: Overhead directly into the sun.

MR. SPROULL: Did you think it might be a reflection from anything?

MR. [redacted]: I thought it might be a reflection from the sunlight at first but then I couldn't account for the blue tinge.

MR. SPROULL: Did it glint or sparkle?

MR. [redacted]: No, it didn't sparkle at all. The light from the object was constant with a constant intensi y but changed as the sun set lower until it turned toward an orange color. As the sun was setting, it became yellow and after the sun completely dropped, it became orange color. I was just observing this particular change of coloring, when it disappeared completely.

MR. SPROULL: What was the manner of disappearance?

MR. [redacted]: It disappeared like the turning off of a light. I was looking directly at it, when it seemed to disappear as an incandescent light when one turns off the switch. There was no expansion and no change in dimension whatsoever. That is the last I saw of the object.

MR. SPROULL: Any tactics employed during flight of object?

MR. [redacted]: No change in altitude or direction.

MR. SPROULL: Was there any sound to this object?

MR. [redacted]: There was no sound whatsoever.

MR. SPROULL: Was there an exhaust trail?

MR. [redacted]: No exhaust trail at all.

MR. SPROULL: Did you notice the object as carrying any lights?

MR. [redacted]: There were no distinguishing charecteristics at all except for the bluish light.

MR. SPROULL: Did this occur to you to be something resembling a flying saucer?

MR. [redacted]: When I first viewed the object, the flying saucers immediately came to my mind.

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[redacted]

NICAP: #163

MR. SPROULL: Do you feel that you were observing a definite object?

MR. [redacted] Yes, it had a definite sharp outline - something I had never seen before. At first I thought it might be a gaseous formation but it didN't have the characteristics of a meteor or comet and the outline was too definite and sharp to be gaseous. It instead appeared to be a definite material object. I had even considered that it might be an astronomical object caught in our Earth's rotation like the moon, but it travelled faster than the sun so it couldn't have been. It was travelling three times as fast as the sun and was going in the same direction as the sun.

MR. SPROULL: Do you know any of the persons who observed this object personally?

MR. [redacted] No.

END OF STATEMENT

HENRY GLOVER
8531 Variel Avenue
Conoga, California

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STATEMENT

Statement made by Mrs. [redacted] Conoga Park, California. 1215 Hours, 17 September 1948, regarding object sighted in the sky, 22 July 1948, in the vicinity of San Fernando Valley, California.

"On the evening of 22 July 1948, at Valley Market Town, while in the company of my husband, Mr. [redacted], we were having dinner in the patio when my attention was called by my husband to an object in the sky. This was approximately between the hours of 1930 and 2000, before dark. Upon gazing straight upward, the object seemed to be round and luminous. It appeared to be metallic changing to yellow-orange and to deeper hues, toward the blue, as darkness came. It seemed to be at a very great distance. In comparing the size, it would be as if I were looking at a platter accross a room at approximately twenty feet distance. There were no seeming gaseous elements, no rays or sound as far as I can remember. It seemed absolutely round. At the time, the sky was cloudless. There was no other object or air craft in the sky. In fact, it was the only object in the sky. Over a period of thirty minutes or more, the object moved from straight upward to a westerly direction. I should say that it travelled approximately twenty or thirty miles. This object moved in a steady gliding motion. There was no exhaust trail or vapors from this object. The color of this object changed gradually seeming to reflect the atmospheric conditions of nightfall. When next my attention was drawn to it, I no longer saw it. My attention was drawn to it, as stated above, by my husband who was standing with a group of eight or ten people who were also gazing at the object. The object was entirely different from anything I had ever seen. It did not appear to be a balloon or any advertizing device. It was a definite material object."

END OF STATEMENT.

Mrs. [redacted]

[redacted]

Conoga, California

Exhibit II

[redacted] (Office)
Pasadena 4, California
[redacted]

[redacted] Avenue (Home)
Pasadena 6
[redacted]

Wednesday, Sept. 22, 1948.

1. Location first sighted. The object was first seen at the Monastery of the Mount Wilson Observatory. The "Monastery" is the name applied to the place where the astronomers live while working on Mount Wilson. It is within a few yards of a mark at 34° 12' 55" N, 7 hours 52 minutes 14.3 seconds West, at an altitude above sea level of 5494 feet.

2. Date and Time of Sighting. About 7:00 PM, Pacific Daylight Saving Time, of July 21, 1948

3. Weather Conditions and Others Who Sighted Object. The sky was clear and the visibility excellent. The people present who saw the object were Mr. [redacted] engineer at the Observatory; Mr. and Mrs. [redacted] stewards at the Monastery; [redacted], cook; Drs. [redacted] and [redacted] astronomers; Dr. [redacted], a visiting astronomer from the Princeton University Observatory; and myself. Mr. [redacted], night assistant at the 100-inch telescope, was present at dinner that evening but left early without seeing the object.

4. Persons Who might have known of the Object or Tried to Photograph it. I know of no others who actually saw the object or who tried to photograph it.

Exhibit III

5. Construction, size, shape, etc. [redacted] and I viewed the object through a six-inch telescope on the mountain top about ten minutes after it was first sighted below at the Monastery. At the Monastery it was viewed through a portable three-inch telescope. Dr. [redacted] joined [redacted] and me while we were observing at the six-inch. [redacted], and I were the only ones who examined the object through the six-inch.

The nature of the object was immediately apparent through the six-inch, which enabled us to see it as if only a few yards away. It consisted of a thin translucent outer envelope enclosing a sphere at the top, the whole having the shape of a pear. Beneath this pear-shaped assembly a square yellow disk was attached by cords. I am sure of these facts.

I believe also that the thin outer envelope had a diamond shaped pattern as if criss-crossed by a network of cords. Also that the cords attached to the yellow disk extended beyond it.

As the object was unfamiliar to us and there was nothing nearby with which to compare it, we could not make an accurate estimate of its size. After thinking it over, however, I think we can get a good idea of its size as follows: I would estimate that the object appeared about 1/5 the diameter of the full moon or subtended an angle of 6'. Today (September 22) I called Mr. Wausnock and asked him how big he thought the object was. Without prompting from me he made an estimate of 1/8 the full moon, which is in good agreement.

Now an object 10,000 feet away that subtends an angle of 6' of arc has a diameter of 17.4 feet. If 20,000 feet away its diameter would be 34.8 feet; if distant 30,000 feet its diameter would be 52.2 feet, and so on. From the general appearance of the object I should say a diameter of about 25 feet would seem reasonable.

6. Color change. The outer envelope resembled a thin white membrane. The square disk below was distinctly yellow without marking. We observed no change in color.

7. Speed. When the object was first sighted at 7:00 P.M. it was slightly south of the Monastery and high overhead, probably over Sierra Madre. When last seen about 8:30 PM, PDST, it was far to the west probably near the coast about 30 miles away. This would mean that it had moved 30 miles in 1.5 hours making its speed 20 miles per hour nearly straight west.

8. Part of Sky First Observed. I would estimate that it was directly south of the Monastery at an altitude of approx. 80°.

9. Direction of Travel. Nearly straight west as seen from Mount Wilson.

10. Manner in which Last Seen. The object was last seen about 8:30 PM, PDST, through the 5-inch telescope at the Monastery by Mr. and Mrs. Wuenpek and myself. The inner sphere was

easily discerned through the outer envelope against the bright background of the sky. After sunset the object then appeared like a brilliant white star in the evening sky, much brighter than the planet Venus. It was very conspicuous owing to the fact that it was still illuminated by the sun's rays while the valley below was in shadow.

11. Maneuverability if any. During the time we observed the object it moved steadily westward without any sudden change in direction.

12. Approximate Altitude. At least 10,000 feet above Mount Wilson which would make its altitude above sea level 15,000 feet. I told the reporter who called me from the L.A.Times that it was only about 2000 feet overhead but later realized that this was much too low.

13. Sound if any. No sound.

14. Exhaust Trails. No exhaust trails detected. They should have been readily visible through the six-inch telescope.

15. Odor. None.

16. Effects on Clouds or Sky Condition. None that we could see. The sky was exceptionally clear around the object all during our observations.

17. Flight Pattern. Steadily westward as described above.

18. Luminous or Incandescence or Lights of any kind. None.

Remarks

About 4:30 PM, I answered a call from the L.A.Times saying that they had received a report of a bright spot over the vicinity of Big Bear Lake. At the Observatory we supposed that this was merely another flying disk rumor and thought nothing of it. But when this remarkable bright object was seen sailing overhead after dinner we became greatly interested and excited. Someone got out the three-inch telescope and after taking a look exclaimed, "It's a balloon!"

We naturally speculated about the object a good deal that evening and surmised that it was probably a meteorological balloon of some kind. About half a dozen unidentified people called inquiring if we had seen the bright disk. I heard Hausnock tell someone that it was a meteorological balloon, but I cautioned him that we didn't know anything of the kind. When the L.A.Times telephoned a second time I described the object essentially as I have here, but emphasized that its nature was unknown to us. I guessed its altitude was 2000 feet but later realized it must have been much higher.

After returning to the office in Pasadena I sent Mr. Hausnock a copy of Popular Science Monthly for May or June, 1949, which had a picture on the cover of a new type of meteorological balloon. I enclosed a note saying that this resembled the object we had seen over Mount Wilson.

S T A T E M E N T

Statement made by [redacted], Telescope Demonstrator, Griffith Park Observatory, [redacted] Los Feliz Station, Los Angeles, California; home address, 5030 [redacted], Los Angeles 43, California. Statement taken by Special Agent William G. Spreull, 23 September 1948.

"The object in question was first noted by myself at approximately 6:30 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time, 21 July 1948, while I was leaving the East Telescope Dome, Griffith's Observatory. It had an altitude of about 60 degrees and an azimuth, from the south point, of about 225 degrees as nearly as I could tell. When I last observed the object at about 8:30 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time, the altitude, I would judge, was about 40 degrees and the azimuth about 100 degrees. The object was moving in a Westerly direction. As seen with the naked eye, the object appeared as a bright round disc with a very slow Westward motion. I first observed the object with a 12" refracting telescope when the object was at about 60 degrees, azimuth 140 degrees. The balloon or main body of the object was an excellent reflecter of sunlight and apparently it was composed of some sort of translucent material such as fibre glass or the like. Suspended from the balloon was a rectangular metallic appearing disc appearing to be gold in color, and hanging from the disc was a length of cord or cable the length of which I could not determine. The object appeared to have ribs running vertically down the side of the main body. Upon further close examination through the 12" telescope, the object appeared to have a shape similar to a pear with the smallest portion hanging towards the bottom. I observed no lights nor any construction on the object such as wings or anything resembling a power plant of any sort. The object was magnified 125 times through the telescope. I would judge the altitude of the object to be at approximately 20,000 feet. The object continued to reflect sunlight even after the sun set because of its altitude. When observing the object, it was at times so brilliant that it was hard to continue looking through the telescope at it. I presume this was due to the reflection of the sunlight, off of the object on to the telescope. During the course the object traversed, it maintained a steady rate of motion and did not appear to be bobbing or maneuvering in any way. Occasionally the object appeared to swing and the rectangular metallic disc would present itself as a knife edge, indicating that the disc was flat with no thickness. I lost sight of the object at about 8:30 P.M. after dark which indicates to me that the object was not generating its own light. I do not know of anyone who photographed or made drawings of the object or personally observed it. I observed no exhaust trails, heard no sound, nor detected any odors with relation to the object.

[redacted]

Exhibit VI

[redacted]

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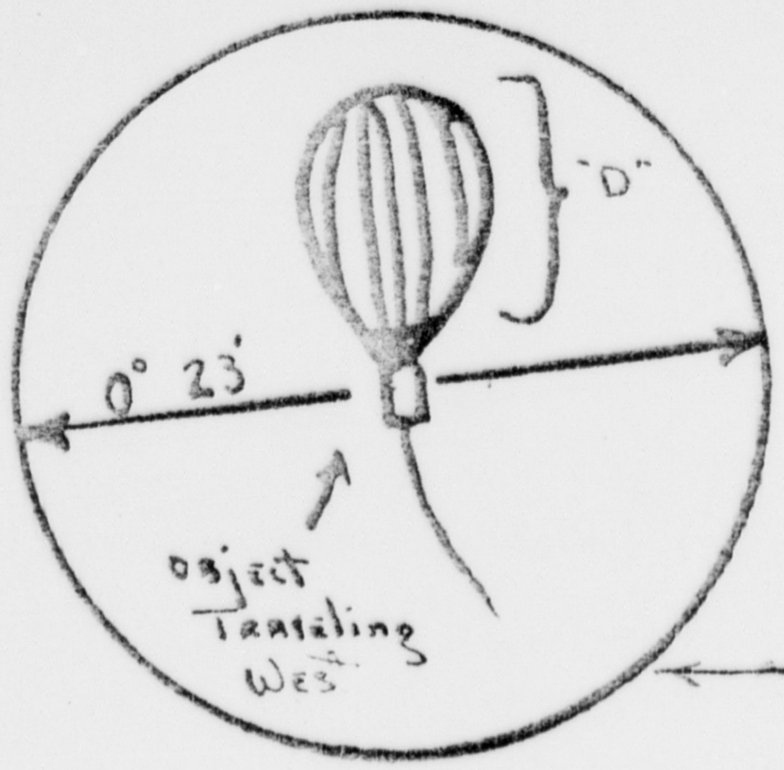
Approximate Size of object as it appeared in the Telescope



THE LENGTH "D" IS EQUAL TO ABOUT SEVEN (7) MINUTES of ARC, OR ABOUT 0.23 THE SIZE OF THE FULL MOON

As Sketched By [redacted]

Reproduced By S.W.T.

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Page 6 of 6 Pages

AMC Form No. 10-3
(Rev 29 Jul 47)

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

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AIR MATERIEL COMMAND

Use this form for inter-office correspondence within headquarters.

Number all comments consecutively.

Use entire width of sheet, both sides.

Use authorized office symbols to designate addressor and addressee.

Note warning signal at lower left of form. Remaining space is sufficient only for proper spacing of typewritten signature.

Place initials of dictator and typist, telephone number and location to right of signature.

Separate comments by horizontal lines across page.

SUBJECT: Project "SIGN" Incident No. 163

TO: MCIAXC — FROM: MCIAXO-3 — DATE: 9 Nov 48 — COMMENT NO. 1.

Attn: Capt Harpster

1. Pursuant to authority contained in paragraph four (4) Technical Instructions 2185, Addendum No. 3, this Command, dated 11 February 1948, this Project has been authorized the assistance of all divisions and activities under the jurisdiction of the Air Materiel Command.

2. Your cooperation is requested in interpreting and analyzing the attached evidence from the viewpoint of the Electronics Sub-Division to enable possible identification of the object reported in our Incident No. 163.

3. The possibility that identification of the unidentified object may fall into purview of a domestic project, too highly classified to permit release at this date, is realized. However, it would be appreciated if advice were given to discontinue further investigation in this specific case, should this matter fall into that category.

4. Attention is invited to drawing on page 6, Exhibit "C" and to attached reproduction of "Popular Science Monthly", Exhibit "G" which shows a new type of meteorological balloon. See item 18, page 5, of statement submitted by Robert S. Richardson of the Mt. Wilson Observatory - Exhibit "C", and Exhibits "H" and "H2".

5. A similar request to this is also being made to the Air Weather Liaison Officer, this Command. Should circumstances so indicate, it is requested that coordination be effected with Colonel Neal, MCLAWS, telephone No. 5-8234 for preparation of comments and return to MCIAXO-3, ATTN: Capt. Sneider.

8 Incls
Exhibits "A" thru "H"

for C. A. GRIFFITH
Chief, Operations Section
Tech Intelligence Division
Intelligence Department

RRS/ej
65310
P 202F
B 288

MCIAXO-3 K-1954 MCIAXC 22 Nov 48 2

1. Review of the incident and statements attached would indicate that the object sighted was the new meteorological balloon used by Dr. John Peoples and New York University in their Balloon Research Project.

2. It is suggested that Dr. Peoples be contacted at Air Forces Electronic Laboratory, Cambridge, Mass., for data on release time, date, and place.

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(CONTINUE ON OTHER SIDE)

TO MCIAIC FROM [illegible] DATE 22 Nov 48 COMMENT NO. 2

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3. Exhibit #2, par. 2, gives a good indication of what different people see in the same object.

Carl B. Lindstrand

6 Incls
n/c

CARL B. LINDSTRAND
Major, USAF
Chief, Electronics Analysis Sec.
Tech Intelligence Div

WRH/pec
6-6324
B 263-A
Post A-1

(DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE)

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Project "SIGN"

MCIAMS MCIAKO-3 10 Nov 47 1.
ATTN: Col Neal
Air Weather Liaison Officer

1. Pursuant to authority contained in paragraph four (4) Technical Instructions 2185, Addendum No. 3, this Command, dated 11 February 1948, this office has been authorized the assistance of all divisions and activities under the jurisdiction of the Air Materiel Command to permit the successful conduct of this project, and is also authorized direct communication with all Army installations by Department of the Army letter dated 25 March 1948, subject, "Unconventional Aircraft".

2. Your cooperation in conjunction with that of the Air Weather Service is therefore requested for the purpose of interpreting and analyzing the evidence appended hereto, in order to provide certain conclusions which may prove or disprove a domestic origin for the anomaly herein described.

3. From the evidence submitted, does the configuration correspond to known domestic meteorological devices now in use?

4. Attention is invited to drawing, page 6, Exhibit "C", to attached reproduction from "Popular Science Monthly", Exhibit "G", which shows a new type of meteorological balloon, and to news items, Exhibits "H" and "H2". See item 18, page 5, of statement submitted by Robert S. Richardson of the Mt. Wilson Observatory (Exhibit "C"). Your comments and any action indicated will be appreciated.

5. Do the attached weather charts (Exhibit "F") fix a possible or probable point of release if object is identified as a domestic release?

6. A map chart of the probable course taken as influenced by the winds aloft data would be of use particularly in relation to possible points of meteorological balloon releases outside the greater Los Angeles Area within the critical periods of time. See paragraph four (4) page 2 of "DETAILS" Exhibit "E", as listed by Special Agent Wm G. Sproull, wherein he states that a Mr. Harvey checked all files pertaining to balloon releases in the greater Los Angeles area.

7. It is requested that a report be submitted directly to MCIAKO-3, ATTN: Captain Sneider.

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8 Incls
Exhibits "A" thru "H2"

H. R. CLINGERMAN
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Tech Intelligence Division
Intelligence Department

HRS/ej
65310
P 202F
B 288

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The following article taken from
"DAILY NEWS" Los Angeles, Calif Thursday, July 22, 1948.

Silver Sphere Deflated as Sky Mystery

It was almost like with the flying disks all over again . . .

The queries started yesterday afternoon among Big Bear Valley residents.

"What is that pear-shaped thing following the sun?" they wanted to know.

Then lowlanders took up the curiosity cudgels, belaboring police, Sheriff's and newspaper switchboards by the hundreds switchboards.

As afternoon wore into evening, the silver sphere was tracked by thousands of neck-craning Southlanders while it moved slowly in a northwesterly direction.

Astral Visitor Identified

At Mt. Wilson Dr. Robert S. Richardson, solar observer, reported that he had scanned the object as it passed nearly overhead on its leisurely course seaward. George Abell, Griffith Observatory attache, also reported following the sphere by telescope.

Their consensus, borne out by the Weather Bureau forecast center at Los Angeles Airport:

A meteorological balloon.

The balloons are supposed to burst at high elevations after automatically broadcasting weather information during their ascent. This one apparently developed a slow leak and sank back toward earth, weathermen said.

A general warning of the balloon's hovering over Los Angeles, describing it as a hazard

The following article taken from the "LOS ANGELES TIMES"
Thursday Morning, July 22, 1948

WM stirs ghosts of the flying discs

Memories of the flying disc phenomenon were revived last night as 1500 persons swamped police and fire department switchboards with telephone calls reporting a mysterious silver object soaring over Los Angeles.

With the experience of that frenzied time a year ago behind them, the police calmly checked around until they got word from the Mount Wilson Observatory that the mysterious silver object was a weather balloon.

The reports reaching police from citizens described the balloon as soaring, dipping, standing still, shooting across the sky, and moving north, east, south and west.

Mt. Wilson informed the police the balloon was drifting slowly with the wind in a westerly direction and had evidently been released in the vicinity of Big Bear Lake.