

PROJECT 10073 RECORD

1. DATE - TIME GROUP 26 June 49 26/0505Z	2. LOCATION Wilmington , Penns., vania, Ohio
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Astro (FIREBALL)
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	Dr Olivier, Director, Flower Observatory and Dri Purves, Executive Director, American Institute of Architects observed object and classified it as a FIREBALL.
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 3 - 3 1/2 Seconds	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Observer noticed an exceptionally large meteor. The object appeared as a blue-green "moon" and was estimated between 1/2 and 2/3 of the size of the diameter of the moon. It appeared 5 deg below the star Altair in the bend of the handle of the Big Dipper. The object moved in Southerly direction through about 20 deg of arc in 3 to 3 1/2 seconds and disappeared behind the roof of a house. Unlike the usual fireball, the appearance was not accompanied by a hissing sound nor was it followed by any thunder sound. It was not followed by any lighted trail.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual	
7. COURSE Southerly	
8. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ☐ Yes ☒ No	

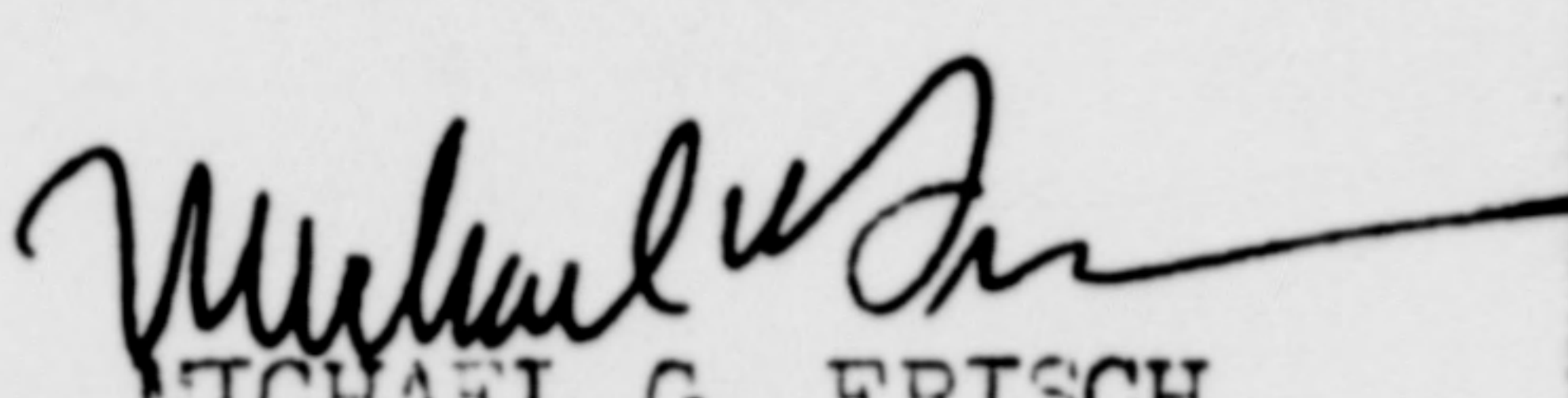
FORM

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ALTM: 00-15AF

WES

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS REPORT OF INVESTIGATION		FILE NO. 24-28	DATE 22 NOV 1949
TITLE UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S) (Aerial Phenomena)		REPORT MADE BY WESLEY L. ZECHINISTER	REPORT MADE AT DO #3, 1612 S Cameron St, Harrisburg, Pa.
		PERIOD 13, 14 Sep; 21, 22, 24 Oct 49	OFFICE OF ORIGIN DO #17, Kirtland AFB, N.M.
		STATUS RUC	
CHARACTER SPECIAL INQUIRY			
REFERENCE Ltr, DO #17, Kirtland AFB, N.M., File 17DO 24-8, dtd 18 August 1949			
SYNOPSIS Investigation requested by District Commander, 17th OSI District, Kirtland AFB, N.M., 18 Aug 1949. Mr. BRANDON BARRINGER, Treasurer, Curtis Publishing Co., Philadelphia, Pa., interviewed and formal statement obtained regarding Subject. Files revealed Sunday, 26 June 1949 edition, "The Philadelphia Inquirer", Philadelphia, Pa. carried article regarding Subject Phenomena. Dr. [REDACTED], Director, Flower Observatory, Upper Darby, Pa., advised Aerial Phenomena was a fireball. Dr. [REDACTED] in receipt of letters pertaining to Subject incident. Dr. [REDACTED], Executive Director, American Institute of Architects, observed Subject Phenomena and classified it as a fireball. Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED], Conshohocken, Pa., substantiated in detail statement given by Mr. [REDACTED].			
DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS. DECLASSIFIED AT 12 YEARS. DOD DIR 5200.10			
DISTRIBUTION DO #17, Kirtland AFB (Action Copy)(4 Incls) 4 Hq OSI, Wash, D.C. 2 (4 Incls) CG, AMC, W/P AFB, Dayton, Ohio(4 Incls) 2 DO #5, W/P AFB (Inf) 1 (4 Incls) File (5 Incls) 2	ACTION COPY FORWARDED TO APPROVED  MICHAEL G. FRISCH Major, USAF District Commander.	FILE STAMP 506 UNCLASSIFIED	

7-3712-21

[REDACTED]

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File 24-28

DETAILS:

1. This investigation was predicated upon receipt of letter from District Commander, DO #17, Kirtland AFB, dtated 18 August 1949, subject: UNKNOWN SUBJECT(S) (Aerial Phenomena), requesting pertinent information in reference to the attached copy of letter from [REDACTED], then Vice President, Pennsylvania Company, Phila, to Dr. LINCOLN LaPAZ, University of Mexico, dated 8 August 1949, in reference to aerial phenomena sighted 26 June 1949 at Media, Pa.

AT PHILADELPHIA, PA.

2. On 14 September 1949 Mr. [REDACTED] Treasurer, Curtis Publishing Co, Independence Square, Phila, Pa., and member of American Meteor Society, was interviewed at the 3d District OSI Detachment. A formal statement was signed by Mr. [REDACTED] on 21 Oct 49 to include additional details of the aerial phenomena and is attached as an inclosure.

3. Files of "The Philadelphia Inquirer" were examined on 22 October 1949 and revealed that article titled "Meteor Soars Over Philadelphia and Explodes", was contained therein in the Sunday, 26 June 1949 edition.

AT UPPER DARBY, PA.

4. On 22 October 1949 Dr. [REDACTED] Director, School of Astronomy, University of Pennsylvania, for the past twenty-eight (28) years; Director, Flower Observatory, Upper Darby, Pa.; and President, American Meteor Society; was interviewed at the Flower Observatory and stated that with the information gathered he was very sure in his own mind that the aerial phenomena seen on the night of 26 June 1949 was a fireball. The director stated that reports coming to him revealed that the fireball appeared 5° below the star Alcor and approximately in the middle of the Big Dipper, the diameter of the object being 1/4 of a degree. During course of interview with Dr. OLIVIER it was learned that he was in receipt of other letters pertaining to this incident. Copies of these letters are attached as inclosures. Dr. OLIVIER is the Consulting Astronomer for the Hydrographic Department of the U. S. Navy, and for a number of years all irregularities in meteor forms have been forwarded to the observatory director for analysis. Dr OLIVIER stated that he handles approximately 15,000 reports per year.

AT MEDIA, PA.

5. It was learned through Mrs. [REDACTED], Plum Creek Road, Media, Pa., on 24 October 1949, that Mr. [REDACTED] Executive Director, American Institute of Architects, was on an extended trip and that it would be best to contact Mr. [REDACTED] via letter to Washington, D. C. In Mr. [REDACTED] reply

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File 24-28

of 26 October 1949, he stated that he and his wife were present with Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] at their home in Media, Pa., sitting outdoors when the fireball appeared. Although not familiar with astronomical phenomena, [REDACTED] unhesitatingly classified the object as a fireball. It was seen for approximately four (4) to five (5) seconds and appeared to be, in size, about equal to a full moon seen at the Zenith and not at the horizon. It was very bright being slightly green in color; moving very fast; appearing to follow a curved course; giving off smaller pieces of light in the same manner as a sky rocket. The ridge of the house obstructed the view making it impossible to see whether or not the object retained its brilliance until it struck the earth. The object distinctly lit up the country side and [REDACTED] did not recall that there was any sound whatsoever. Mr. [REDACTED] stated he would guess the object was probably fifty (50) miles away. This letter is being retained in files of 3d District OSI.

AT CONSHOHOCKEN, PA.

6. Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] were interviewed on 21 October 1949 and substantiated in detail the statement given by Mr. [REDACTED]

Inclosures:

FOR DISTRICT OFFICE NO. 17, KIRTLAND AFB

1. Statement of [REDACTED], dated 21 October 1949, at Philadelphia, Pa.
2. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. [REDACTED] Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.
3. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., undated.
4. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

FOR HQ, OSI

1. Statement of [REDACTED], dated 21 October 1949, at Philadelphia, Pa.
2. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.
3. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., undated.

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File 24-28

4. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to DR. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

FOR CG, ALC, W/P AFB, DAYTON, OHIO, ATTN: CIA-XO-3

1. Statement of [REDACTED], dated 21 October 1949, at Philadelphia, Pa.

2. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

3. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., undated.

4. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

FOR DO #5, W/P AFB, DAYTON, OHIO

1. Statement of [REDACTED], dated 21 October 1949, at Philadelphia, Pa.

2. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

3. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., undated.

4. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

FOR DO #3, 1612 S. CAMERON ST, HARRISBURG, PA.

1. Statement of [REDACTED], dated 21 October 1949, at Philadelphia, Pa.

2. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

3. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., undated.

4. True copy of letter from [REDACTED] to Dr. I. M. LEVITT, Franklin Institute, Phila, Pa., dated 27 June 1949.

5. Letter from [REDACTED] Executive Director, The American Institute of Architects, 1741 New York Avenue, NW, Washington 6, D.C., dated 26 October 1949.

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REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN

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PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

October 21, 1949

I, [REDACTED] of Villa Nova, Pennsylvania, prior to making the statement contained in the following paragraphs, have been advised by EUGENE L. ZECHMEISTER, who has identified himself to me as a Special Agent, Office of Special Investigations, USAF, that I do not have to make any statement and that any statement I may make may be used against me in a court of law. I have also been informed of my right to have an attorney. With such understanding, I make the following statement of my own free will and accord, and in no threat or fear of punishment and without inducement and promise of immunity or reward.

On the night of 26 June, 1949, at approximately 0005 hours, I sighted what appeared to be a fireball (an exceptionally large meteor). I was seated on the lawn of my friends, Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] whose home my wife and I were visiting, and was looking toward the northwestern sky. There were no clouds and visibility was good. The lawn is within 20 feet of the Media Reservoir belonging to the Philadelphia Suburban Water Company, and southeast of the Purves house. It is about 20 feet above the Reservoir.

The object appeared as a blue-green "moon" and was, I would estimate, between $1/2$ and $2/3$ of the size of the diameter of the moon. It appeared 5 degrees below the star Altair in the bend of the handle of the Big Dipper. Unlike the usual fireball, it did not appear as a streak, or light steadily growing brighter, but at its full size. There was no question of any confusion with the moon or a planet, as it was many times larger than any planet, and as, of course, the moon or a planet could not be in this direction.

The object moved in a southerly direction through about 20 degrees of arc in 3 to $3 1/2$ seconds, and disappeared behind the roof of the Purves house. It was also seen by Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED] but my wife, who looked around, only saw a bluish green glow above the hill, which blocked the view to the West.

Unlike the usual fireball, the appearance was not accompanied by a hissing sound nor was it followed by any thunder sounds. It was not followed by any lighted trail.

As to its actual size, height or speed, I can make no statement, as, of course, any one of these factors would be dependent on the other. As noted above, its diameter was about $1/2$ " of arc and it moved through about 20 degrees of arc in 3 to $3 1/2$ seconds. Calculating very roughly, if it was 50 miles away, the altitude would be about 20 miles and the speed about 7 miles a second; if the distance was greater, both altitude and speed would also be greater, and the reverse would apply if it was nearer. It was about 30 degrees above the horizon when it appeared and about 15 degrees when it disappeared behind the house.

As noted above, it was a circular disc and there was no sign of any exhaust. I have never previously seen a large fireball and was somewhat surprised that it was not blinding, but gave out a little less light than the full moon.

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Its path was entirely regular, with no change of course or speed. There was no variation in the amount of light or any "blinking". No rotation could have been observed as no features of the disc were visible.

Mr. [REDACTED] thought he saw it leave behind some red sparks, but neither Mrs. Purves or I saw these.

My friend, Mrs. A. [REDACTED] and some guests, from their lawn at Conshohocken, ten miles north of Media, at about the same time of the night, saw what was undoubtedly the same object, traveling, they think, from northwest to southeast. They at first thought it was a rocket and then realized that it was a meteor.

I reported the sighting promptly to The Franklin Institute, who furnished an account which was published in the late edition of the Sunday Bulletin on 26 June, 1949. The following day I wrote to Dr. [REDACTED] of the University of Pennsylvania Flower Observatory at Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, and gave them a detailed account of the phenomenon. I sent copies of this letter to Dr. Lincoln LaPaz, Director of the Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico, Los Alamos, New Mexico, and also to Dr. Frederick S. Leonard, Astronomer, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California.

Dr. Olivier is President of the American Meteor Society and as such collects accounts of all meteors. He tells me that he has not obtained enough other accounts to enable him to trace the actual course of the object by triangulation. Dr. LaPaz wrote me a series of questions about the phenomenon, which I have answered, and I understand that the Office of Special Investigations, USAF, has a copy of this answer.

I have read this statement, which consists of two pages. I have signed this statement and initialed all corrections. This statement is the truth to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I have given it freely and voluntarily

/s/ [REDACTED]

Witness:

/s/ Eugene L. Zechmeister
EUGENE L. ZECHMEISTER, S/A.
Philadelphia, Pa.

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3503 Race Street
Phila 4, Pa.
June 27, 1949

~~████████████████████~~
Franklin Institute
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Sir:

I am sending you my observation of what appeared to be a meteor of a very bright intensity which I observed while sitting in my back yard on Sat. night. The time was approximately midnight. The duration of visibility for me was very short, probably no more than 2 to 3 seconds as it disappeared from view behind a house to the west of me. The color was a bright blue and the intensity was enough to light up the area around us as if a Fourth of July Rocket had gone off several hundred feet in the air. The duration of fall - it seemed to come from the area in the vicinity of the handle of the Big Dipper and fall to the southwest. I was facing north and when it disappeared from my view it was almost straight northwest of me. The angle seemed to be a perfect circle.

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*Brightest
Point*

I hope my very amateur observations may be of some help to you.

Respectfully yours,

A TRUE COPY:

/s/ ~~████████████████████~~

/s/ Eugene L. Zechmeister
EUGENE L. ZECHMEISTER, SA, OSI

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N. W. AYER & SON, INC.

West Washington Square
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

Dr. I. N. Levitt
The Franklin Institute
Philadelphia 3, Penna.

Dear Dr. Levitt:

Confirming our phone conversation, here is my impression of the meteorite seen on the night of June 25.

I am not sure of the time, but it was around 12:30. The meteorite looked unusually large and unusually bright - at least as bright as the full moon. I saw it in the western sky - perhaps a little south of the west - from my home in Gladwyne. Its horizontal direction was not from right to left but from northwest toward southwest.

I saw it through trees and can not tell the length of its visible travel. It was visible to us for perhaps a second to a half.

Physically it was large primarily, while with a rather short thick trail that had definite blue color. A sort of parallel trail, thinner, was definitely red and yellow.

I would say that its angle with the horizon was about 45° .

I would be interested in hearing if it landed and has been discovered.

Sincerely,

A TRUE COPY:

/s/

~~_____~~
Bryn Lawr

/s/ Eugene L. Zechmeister

EUGENE L. ZECHMEISTER, SA, CSI

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1125 Somerville Ave
Phila 41, Pa.
June 27, 1949

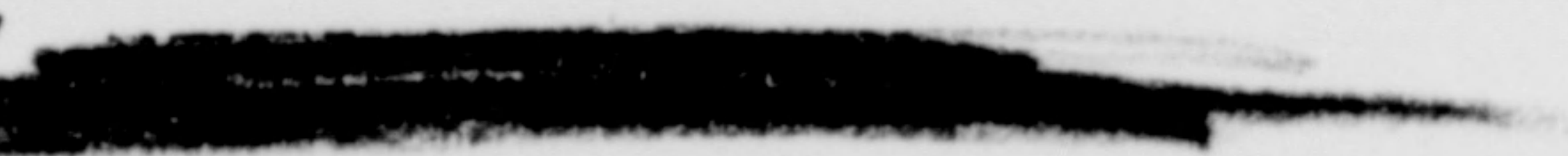
Dr. I. Levitt
Fells Planetarium
20th Parkway
Philadelphia 3, Pa.

Dear Dr. Levitt:

Mrs. Esther B. King of Aldin Park Manor told me that she has been in touch with the Planetarium and that you would like to have a report of what I saw in the heavens shortly after midnight Saturday night, June 25th. Mrs. King and I were sitting on the steps in front of my house at 1125 Somerville Ave (Logan) and I was facing toward the west. As we talked, my attention was suddenly caught by a ball of fire sweeping across the western sky. It moved from the north, turned south, in a line slanting earthward, not so rapidly as a shooting star, but at a speed that gave me five or six seconds to observe it before it dropped behind the trees. It was a very bright flaming ball, red-gold in color, and behind it streamed a wide fiery path which gradually diminished in breadth until it tapered away. The ball of fire did not appear to be as high in the sky as were the lights of a plane that shortly afterwards passed overhead. No sound accompanied the display which took place less than 10 minutes after midnight.

Sincerely yours,

A TRUE COPY:

/s/ 

/s/ Eugene L. Zechmeister
EUGENE L. ZECHMEISTER, SA, CSI

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The following information was taken from Info Rec 10-544, W 10-204:

From: District Intelligence Officer, 1st Naval District
To: Director of Naval Intelligence

Subj: "Flying Discs" - information concerning.

- Encl: (A) Copy of report of observations made on 25 and 26 June 1949, in the vicinity of Haven Beach, New Jersey, by J. Allen Rogers.
(B) Copy of report of observations made on 26 June 1949, in the vicinity of Haven Beach, New Jersey, by Len Wilson, same subject.
(C) Copy of report of observation made on 26 June 1949, in the vicinity of Haven Beach, New Jersey, by Suzanne Smith, same subject.
(D) Philadelphia (PA.) Inquirer clipping, 10 July 1949, same subject.

1. Enclosures (A), (B), (C) and (D) are forwarded herewith for information.
2. Mr. Charles H. L. Clock is known to this office and is considered to be a reliable and stable individual.

s/

Captain, USN

cc: CSE-DE-USA-3rd District

**DOWNGRADED AT INTERVALS:
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DOD DEC 1980**

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~~Mr. Memorial Building~~
~~9 South Main Avenue~~
~~Bryn Mawr, Pa.~~
~~(State of Local Board)~~

July 2, 1949

Officer in Charge,
Naval Intelligence,
Phila. Navy Yard.

Dear Sir:

I beg to report a peculiar light in the sky over the bay opposite Virginia Avenue, Long Beach Island, New Jersey, on the nights of June 25, and 26, 1949.

This light attracted my attention about 11 P. M. on June 25, because it moved parallel to the earth's surface at great speed, making sudden starts and stops. I assumed it was an atypical shooting star and paid little attention.

On June 26, at 11:15 P. M. the light appeared again, and performed as follows:- It made the outline of a huge parallelogram, travelling at great speed, but making abrupt stops; all changes in direction were made by right angled turns. The parallelogram would be outlined in either direction, but not always completed. Sometimes the light would outline two sides of the parallelogram and then retrace itself. Every time a right angled turn was made, a distinct stop was observed. In color the light was pinkish white. It was observed until midnight on June 26.

I am transmitting this report through the hands of my good neighbor, Mr. Charles H. L. Fleck.

Yours truly,

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~~(Chairman Board 107)~~

Home Address

928 Paverford Road, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Summer "

Box 91, Beach Haven Terrace, New Jersey.

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~~(CLASSIFIED "A")~~

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7/11/82

Dear Mr. Slack,

Enclosed please find the report on Sunday night's observations. I'm sorry I couldn't get it off so near but the ice cream business is tying up my time, except for an occasional rain storm.

Not knowing what form to follow I didn't follow any; just put the details.

Sincerely

On Sunday, June 20th, between 1:00 A.M. and 2:00 A.M. there was a point of light in the sky, South West of Raven Beach, at an elevation of 40°. It had the brilliance of a second magnitude star and its color fluctuated from blue-white to red-white and back, the cycle taking about two minutes.

It changed position with the star-sphere but the change was not uniform. The light oscillated slowly in a very small area, with no particular rhythm.

At about 2:00 A.M. the color fluctuations and oscillation stopped and there was no further activity for the next half-hour, after which observation ceased.

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(ENCLOSURE "B")

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Box 232

Longport, New Jersey

Dear Sirs:

The following events which I shall try to recreate as closely as possible occurred on Sunday June 24th, at Longport, New Jersey between 11:20 P.M. and 2:30 A.M.

I was looking at the heavens, when I saw what I thought was a very large star. The object was at the bottom of the other stars over the ocean. Within ten minutes its star appearance changed to an orange yellow, round object. Heat and energy were discernable. Its only great noticeable change in direction occurred within the first half-hour. Below is a diagram showing its movement. From the position below

House top

it moved up and down but there was no great change in position. I should add that while this object usually moved it was always to the right of its initial position and then upwards.

Before any movement you would see a red color which surrounded the object and the object would change a little in shape and with this movement you could see white objects which looked very much like tiny stars falling away from this object as it moved. When it moved it moved unsteadily from side to side and appeared to be bucking against the wind. You could also see rays coming from this object. I would say six. The rays were quite long and as the object moved these rays appeared. Their direction varied as the object varied. I saw a blue streak come from this object once - and once only. It appeared that this object moved in a clockwise position while the other objects around it moved in a counterclockwise position. At around 1:30 A.M., this object seemed to divide into two parts and move straight up. It then changed its direction and when I last looked at it - it resembled a lighted cigar. The fiery object seemed to have a translucent body attached to it but its position was the same as before.

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(ENCLOSURE "C")

COPY

NOTE: (ENCLOSURE "D") not legible.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

5D-OSI/fmn

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL, USAF
5TH DISTRICT OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, DAYTON, OHIO

IN REPLY REFER TO: 5D 24-21

28 November 1949

SUBJECT: PROJECT GRUDGE
SPECIAL INQUIRY

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

1. The attached report of investigation by Special Agent EUGENE L. ZECHMEISTER, DO #3, dated 22 November 1949, is forwarded for your information and any action deemed necessary.

2. This investigation was not requested by nor through this office.

1 Incl
R/I dtd 22 Nov 49
(in dup)

James F. X. O'Connell
JAMES F. X. O'CONNELL
Lt Colonel, USAF
District Commander

**DOWNGRADED AT INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AT 25 YEARS.
DOD DEN 1000**

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11-30

Astral Sireball 11/506

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