PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE
16 Jan 61

2. LOCATION
40 mi W of Santa Rosa Island, & Los Angeles, California

3. DATE-TIME GROUP
Local 1800
GMT 170200Z

4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION
☐ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar
☒ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar

5. PHOTOS
☐ Yes
☒ No

6. SOURCE
Military and Civilian

7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION
3-4 Sec

8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS
One then many

9. COURSE
Descending

10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING Round object, size of basketball. Blueish white, like an electric arc. No definate formation. Object seen by pilot; passing off port side object broke into several smaller pieces. Appeared 15°, 280°. Object descended and broke up into many pieces, then faded out.

11. COMMENTS Description of object is characteristic of a meteor breaking up in the earth's atmosphere.

12. CONCLUSIONS
☐ Was Balloon
☐ Probably Balloon
☐ Possibly Balloon
☐ Was Aircraft
☐ Probably Aircraft
☐ Possibly Aircraft
☐ Was Astronomical METEOR
☒ Probably Astronomical
☐ Possibly Astronomical
☐ Other
☐ Insufficient Data for Evaluation
☐ Unknown

ATIC FORM 329 (REV 26 SEP 52)

JOINT MESSAGEFORM

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

SPACE BELOW RESERVED FOR COMMUNICATION CENTER

23 JAN 61 1547Z Tot 23/1717Z

ST

PRECEDENCE	TYPE MSG (Check)			ACCOUNTING SYMBOL	ORIG. OR REFERS TO	CLASSIFICATION OF REFERENCE
ACTION ROUTINE	BOOK	MULTI	SINGLE	AF	1381	UNCLAS
INFO						

FROM: ATIC W-P AFB

TO: SANTA ROSA ISLAND AFS, CALIF RJWZJBG.

/UNCLAS/AFCIN-4E2x 1-712

669TH ACWRON, YOUR MSG 1381, DTD 17 JAN 61, RPTG THE SIGHTING OF A UFO. THE INFO RPTD IS VERY LIMITED IN NATURE, PRECLUDING A VALID CONCLUSION. REQ MORE DETAILED INFO BE RPTD IN ACCORDANCE WITH AFR 200-2, DTD 14 SEP 59.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

181345Z

DATE 18 | TIME 0845

MONTH JAN | YEAR 1961

WRITER

SYMBOL: AFCIN-4E2x

TYPED NAME AND TITLE (Signature Required): Maj Robert J. Friend

PHONE 69216 | PAGE NR. 1 | NR. OF PAGES 1

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

RELEASER

SIGNATURE

TYPED (or stamped) NAME AND TITLE:

PHILIP G. EVANS
Colonel, USAF
Deputy for Science and Components

DD FORM 1 MAY 55 173 REPLACES DD FORM 173, 1 OCT 49, WHICH WILL BE USED UNTIL EXHAUSTED

[illegible]

[illegible] RJWZJEC 5

[illegible] 261905Z

FM 669 ACWSC SANTA ROSA I L AFB TH CALIF

TO AIR TECH INTELLIGENCE CEN WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OHIO

BT

UNCLAS 669OCP1423. REFERENCE YOUR UNCLAS AFCIN-4E2H 1-712

THE FOLLOWING IS SUBMITTED.

A. 1. ROUND

2. BASKETBALL

3. BLUEISH WHITE LIKE AN ELECTRIC ARC

4. 1 THEN MANY

5. NO DEFINATE FORMATION

6. APPEARED TO BE METEOR

7. SMALL

8. NONE

26 JAN 61 20 19Z

1
2
3 - 4E2 (UFO)
4 - 4x2a

Friend

RECEIVED
JAN 61
ATIC

PAGE TWO RJWZJEC 5

9. OBJECT SEEN BY PILOT OF PAYMENT 23 PASSING OF THE PORT SIDE OBJECT BROKE INTO SEVERAL SMALLER PIECES. OBJECT FOLLOWED EAST-WEST COAST LINE OVER SANTA BARBARA. ENDED FLIGHT OVER POINT ANGUILLA.

B. 1. BRIGHT LIGHT

2. 15 DEGREES-270 DEGREES

3. OBJECT DESCRIBED AND BROKE UP INTO MANY PIECES

4. STRAIGHT WITH SLIGHT DESCENT

5. BROKE INTO SEVERAL SMALLER SEGMENTS AND THEN FADED OUT

6. 3 TO 4 SECONDS

C. 1. AIR-VISUAL

2. NONE

3. FSH, POINT MUGU, 2500, 060 DEGREES, 400 KTS, POINT MUGU NAS

D. 1. APPROXIMATE 17/0230Z

2. DUCK

E. 40 MILES WEST OF SANTA ROSA ISLAND

F. TROUT R L, LT COMMANDER, USN, AIR DEVELOPMENT 4, AIR TO AIR WEAPONS OFFICER, GOOD

G. 1. CLEAR

2. NOT AVAILABLE

156432

3. NOT AVAILABLE

4. UNLIMITED

5. CLEAR

6. NONE

H. NONE

I. NONE

J. NONE

K. SENIOR DIRECTOR; POSSIBLE METEOR

L. NONE

ET

26/1900Z JAN RJWZJBG

v 1961

UPI A113N HC
URGENT
LOS ANGELES, JAN. 16 (UPI)--A GIANT BALL OF FIRE FLASHED ACROSS THE HORIZON IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TONIGHT, ALARMING RESIDENTS WHO SWAMPED POLICE SWITCHBOARDS WITH INQUIRIES.

THE CONTROL TOWER AT LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SAID IT RECEIVED SEVERAL REPORTS OF SIGHTINGS FROM PLANES IN THE AREA AS WELL AS CALLS FROM MANY RESIDENTS.

A SPOKESMAN AT THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER DESCRIBED THE FLASH AS "A HUGE BALL OF FIRE WHICH SEEMED TO SPLIT INTO TWO PARTS. IT WAS GOING NORTH

DESCRIBED THE FLASH AS "A HUGE BALL OF FIRE WHICH SEEMED TO SPLIT INTO TWO PARTS. IT WAS GOING NORTHWEST.

"WE ASSUME IT WAS A METEOR, BUT A LOT OF CALLERS SAID IT LOOKED LIKE A SATELLITE REENTERING THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE."

THE FLASH OF BRILLIANT ORANGE-RED FLAME WAS REPORTED FROM SANTA BARBARA, 110 MILES UP THE COAST, FROM PALMDALE, A DESERT CITY ABOUT 100 MILES NORTHEAST OF HERE, AND THROUGHOUT THE METROPOLITAN LOS ANGELES AREA.

THERE WAS NO OFFICIAL WORD FROM ANY SOURCE AS TO WHAT THE FIRE BALL WAS.

IT WAS THE FOURTH SUCH INCIDENT THAT HAS KEPT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIANS EDGY. FIRST WAS A SLIGHT EARTHQUAKE FRIDAY NIGHT. A SONIC BOOM RATTLED THE AREA SATURDAY. AND HUGH 15-FOOT WAVES--SO FAR UNEXPLAINED--HAVE BEEN BATTERING THE SHORELINE.

"I HEARD A SWISHING SOUND," SAID FONTANA POLICEMAN WILLIAM TENNEY. TENNEY, AT HOME AT THE TIME, SAID HE HUSTLED HIS CHILDREN INTO THE HOUSE AFTER IT PASSED OVER.

POLICE IN FONTANA, A SUBURB 40 MILES EAST OF HERE, SAID THEY HAD RECEIVED RADIO REPORTS OF SIGHTINGS FROM AS FAR AWAY AS SAN DIEGO TO THE SOUTH AND BAKERSFIELD TO THE NORTH.

"ITOS A GIANT W

"IT WAS A GIANT WHITE BALL OF FLAME TRAILING A GOLD TAIL," SAID POLICEMAN TENNEY.

R634PPS..

TUPI A123N HC
UPIR A122N HC
URGENT
1ST LEAD FIREBALL (A113N)
LOS ANGELES, JAN. 16 (UPI)--A GIANT BALL OF FIRE FLASHING ACROSS THE HORIZON AT DUSK LIGHTED UP MUCH OF CALIFORNIA TONIGHT, ALARMING THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS ALREADY EDGY BECAUSE OF RECENT UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENA.
REPORTS OF SIGHTINGS CAME FROM SAN DIEGO, ON THE MEXICO BORDER WHERE COAST GUARD PLANES WERE DISPATCHED TO INVESTIGATE THE MYSTERIOUS FIREBALL, TO MARIN COUNTY NORTH OF SAN FRANCISCO. METEOROLOGISTS AT LAS VEGAS, 300 MILES INLAND, ALSO SIGHTED IT.
JUST LAST LAST NIGHT ANOTHER TREMENDOUS FLASH OF LIGHT BRIGHTENED THE SKY IN SOUTHERN OREGON AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, LIGHTING EUREKA, CALIF., ALMOST [illegible] DAYLIGHT.
THE AIR FORCE AT VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE ON THE CENTRAL CALIFORNIA SEASIDE AND THE HIGH PRIORITY BALLISTIC MISSILE DIVISION SAID THERE WERE NO U.S. ROCKET FIRINGS AT THE TIME THE STRANGE LIGHT WAS SEEN TONIGHTBRIGHTLYLATEST OVERLOSTPST (S P.M. EST).
OLINES R3 NX

WERE NO U.S. ROCKET FIRINGS AT THE TIME THE STRANGE LIGHT WAS SEEN TONIGHT SHORTLY AFTER Y O'CLOCK PST (S P.M. EST).
APPARENTLY BRIGHTEST OVER SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, IT WAS DESCRIBED AS A WIERD BUT BRILLIANT BALL OF FLAME-TRAILING MULTICOLORED GLOW.
DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FIREBALL VARIED AS TO WHERE IT WAS SIGHTED.
"WE ASSUME IT WAS A METEOR BREAKING UP," SAID A SPOKESMAN AT THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS TRAFFINC CONTROL CENTER IN LOS ANGELES. "BUT IT LOOKED LIKE A SATELLITE REENTERING THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE."
AIR FORCE MAJ. IRV NEUWIRTH, A MEMBER OF THE BALLISTIC MISSILE DIVISION, SAID HE SAW THE TAIL END OF THE FIREBALL AS HE DROVE INTO HIS DRIVEWAY.
"IT JUST LOOKED LIKE A METEOR TO ME, MAYBE ONE THAT WAS BREAKING UP. BUT IT WAS BRIGHT--BRIGHTER THAN ANYTHING I'VE SEN."
THE VENTURA AND SANTA BARBARA SHERIFF'S OFFICES WERE SWAMPED WITH CALLS--AS WERE MOST AREA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICES. CALLERS TO THOSE TWO OFFICES, HOWEVER, SAID IT LOOKED LIKE THE OBJECT FELL NEAR SAN LUIS OBISPO--200 MILES NORTH OF LOS ANGELES.
IN SAN LUIS OBISPO, THOUGH, THE OBJECT WAS SEEN STILL HEADED OUT TO SEE--A WHITE BALL OF FLAME SHOWERING OFF REDDISH-ORANGE SPARKS.
(PICKUP 7TH PGH: A113N: IT WAS THE FOURTH)
HR/SH724PPS

(READ 4TH PGH XXX AFTER 6 O'CLOCK ETC.)

HX 13

UPI A136N HC
URGENT

2ND LEAD FIREBALL (A123N)

LOS ANGELES, JAN. 16 (UPI)--A GIANT FIRE-TRAILING METEOR FLASHED ACROSS THE HORIZON THROUGHOUT MOST OF CALIFORNIA TONIGHT, ALARMING THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS ALREADY EDGY BECAUSE OF RECENT UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENA.

REPORTS OF SIGHTINGS CAME FROM SAN DIEGO, ON THE MEXICO BORDER, TO MARIN COUNTY, NORTH OF SAN FRANCISCO--A SPAN OF ABOUT 600 MILES. IT ALSO WAS SIGHTED BY WEATHERMEN IN AN AIR PORT TOWER IN LAS VEGAS, 300 MILES INLAND.

TOUCHED OFF BY THE THOUSANDS OF SIGHTINGS WERE WILD REPORTS OF AIR CRASHES, NUMEROUS FIRES STARTED BY EMBERS FROM THE METEORITE, AND THAT DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS HAD TRACKED THE HUGE FIREBALL INTO THE PACIFIC OCEAN. ALL WERE FALSE.

THE MOUNT WILSON OBSERVATORY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA--WHERE THE FIREBALL APPEARED MOST BRILLIANT--SAID IT WAS COMMON FOR PERIODIC SHOWERS OF METEORS TO HIT THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, CAUSING THEM TO APPEAR QUITE BRIGHT. SUCH A CONDITION, A SPOKESMAN SAID, IS KNOWN AS DRACOID.

JUST LAST NIGHT A METEOR FLASHED ACROSS THE SKY IN SOUTHERN OREGON AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, LIGHTING UP EUREKA, CALIF., ALMOST LIKE DAYLIGHT.

ACHECK WITH MILITARY AND DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS SHOWED THERE WAS NO ROCKET FIRINGS AT THE TIME THE METEOR WAS SIGHTED, ABOUT 6 O'CLOCK TONIGHT (9 P. M. EST), AND THERE WAS NO RADAR TRACKING OF THE FIERY OBJECT.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE FIREBALL VARIED AS TO WHERE THEY WERE SEEN, BUT MOST PEOPLE AGREED IT WAS RAPIDLY MOVING NORTHWEST--A GIANT BALL OF FIRE TRAILING A LONG MULTICOLORED TAIL. OBSERVERS IN SOME AREAS SAID IT LEFT AN EERIE BLUISH LIGHT AFTERGLOW.

AN AIR FORCE OFFICER, FAMILIAR WITH ROCKET LAUNCHINGS BOTH AT CALIFORNIA'S VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE AND CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA., DESCRIBED IT AS, "A VERY BRIGHT LIGHT---AS BRIGHT AS I'VE EVER SEEN."

(PICKUP 7TH PGH: A123N: WE ASSUME IT)

R826PPS..

UPI A52

DAY LEAD FIREBALL

EDITORS NOTE--WHEN A LARGE METEOR FLASHED ACROSS CALIFORNIA LAST NIGHT, IT TOUCHED OFF A SERIES OF WILD--AND FALSE--REPORTS THAT PROVIDE A CLASSIC STUDY IN THE BEGINNING OF PANIC. THE FOLLOWING STORY IS A PROFILE OF THE INCIPIENT PANIC, HOW IT DEVELOPED AND HOW IT FINALLY WAS RESOLVED.

BY DONALD L. NEFF

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

LOS ANGELES, JAN. 17 (UPI)--IT BEGAN CALMLY ENOUGH: A MYSTERIOUS BRIGHT LIGHT WAS SEEN FLASHING ACROSS THE SKY TRAILING A GLOWING TAIL.

BEFORE IT ENDED, THERE WERE REPORTS THAT FIRES WERE RAGING THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA, THAT METAL DEBRIS AND SPARKS WERE RAINING FROM THE SKY AND THAT A MAN-MADE SATELLITE HAD PLUNGED TO EARTH.

ALL THE REPORTS WERE FALSE EXCEPT THE FIRST ONE. THERE HAD INDEED BEEN A BRIGHT FLASH. IT WAS CAUSED, ASTRONOMERS BELIEVE, BY A HUGE METEOR THAT BLAZED THROUGH THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, LEAVING A FIERY TRAIL THAT WAS SEEN IN MUCH OF CALIFORNIA AND AS FAR AS 300 MILES INLAND IN NEVADA.

IT WAS NEARLY AN HOUR BEFORE THE MYSTERIOUS FLASH COULD BE IDENTIFIED. DURING THAT TIME A RISING TIDE OF PANIC SEEMED TO OVERTAKE MANY GENERALLY RELIABLE OFFICIALS WHO SOON WERE REPEATING FANTASTIC RUMORS.

UPI'S LOS ANGELES BUREAU FIRST GOT TIPPED ON THE FIREBALL SHORTLY AFTER 6 P. M. BY ITS PHOTO BUREAU MANAGER, RAY MARONEY, WHO SIGHTED THE FLASH WHILE AT HOME.

A SERIES OF CALLS TO POLICE, LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS AGENCY AND VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE BROUGHT FORTH ENOUGH INFORMATION TO WARRANT AN URGENT STORY THAT AN APPARENT HUGE METEOR HAD FLASHED ACROSS THE AREA.

THEN A FLOOD OF INCOMING CALLS FROM CORRESPONDENTS THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA TO BUREAUS IN LOS ANGELES, SAN DIEGO, SAN FRANCISCO AND SACRAMENTO BEGAN TAKING ON AN ASPECT OF RUMOR AND PANIC.

IN SAN FRANCISCO, IT WAS REPORTED FIRE WAS RAGING IN MONTERREY. OFFICIALS IN MONTERREY SAID NO FIRES WERE THERE, BUT THEY HEARD "THAT FIRE TRUCKS ARE ROLLING ALL OVER LOS ANGELES." THERE WERE NONE IN LOS ANGELES, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME FALSE ALARMS.

AN AIR FORCE OFFICIAL FROM HAMILTON AIR FORCE BASE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE CALIFORNIA DISASTER OFFICE IN SACRAMENTO HAD REPORTS OF FIRES IN BAKERSFIELD AND SANTA BARBARA, BUT OFFICIALS IN THOSE CENTRAL CITIES SAID THAT OUTSIDE OF NUMEROUS FALSE ALARMS THEY THOUGHT FIRES WERE RAGING IN THE MODESTO AREA.

THE FIRE RUMORS HAD GONE FULL CIRCLE. THE ONLY INDICATION OF WHAT POSSIBLY STARTED THE RUMORS WAS SOME CONTROLLED BURNING OF WEEDS AT THAT TIME BY OFFICIALS IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY.

PASSERS-BY IN THE AREA APPARENTLY CONNECTED THE CONTROLLED FIRES WITH THE FIREBALL.....

-0-

FROM EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE NEAR LOS ANGELES THEN CAME THE REPORT--UNOFFICIAL--THAT IT WAS BELIEVED THE AIR FORCE TRACKING STATION AT OXNARD HAD TRACKED THE FIREBALL. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE FIREBALL FELL IN THE PACIFIC 10 MILES OFF SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND IN THE GENERAL SAN DIEGO AREA.

THREE TELEPHONE CALLS TO OXNARD AND CALLS TO THE TRACKING STATIONS AT POINT ARGUELLO AND POINT MUGU OF THE PACIFIC BALLISTIC MISSILE RANGE ALL FAILED TO CONFIRM THE REPORT.

THEY ALSO FAILED TO CONFIRM REPORTS FROM WIDELY SCATTERED AREAS THAT THE FIREBALL ACTUALLY WAS A MISSILE OR MAN-MADE SATELLITE BREAKING UP IN THE ATMOSPHERE.

OTHER REPORTS--ALL CHECKED OUT AND ALL PROVED FALSE--WERE THAT THE FIREBALL SMASHED INTO THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS (WHICH ARE DENSELY POPULATED), THAT IT CRASHED INTO A VALLEY NEAR BORON AND THAT METAL PIECES FROM IT WERE FOUND.

THE REPORTS AGAIN PROVED TO BE FALSE, AND AS IN OTHER CASES APPARENTLY GREW UP AS A MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN AT LEAST THREE SOURCES, IN THIS CASE THE LANCASTER SHERIFF'S STATION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, EDWARDS AFB AND THE CIVIL DEFENSE WARNING SYSTEM.

-0-

ALL TOLD, AN ESTIMATED 50 TELEPHONES WERE MADE TO THE UPI LOS ANGELES BUREAU DURING THE FIRST FRANTIC HOUR OF THE FIREBALL REPORT, AND ABOUT 60 OUTGOING CALLS TO CHECK THE STORY WERE PLACED.

IT ENDED AS CALMLY AS IT BEGAN, WITH THE STORY REPORTING THAT A METEOR HAD FLASHED ACROSS THE SKY. THE STORY QUOTED A SPOKESMAN FROM MOUNT WILSON OBSERVATORY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SAYING SHOWERS OF METEORS WERE COMMON PERIODICALLY--THUS BACKING UP REPORTS OF BRIGHT METEOR SIGHTINGS SUNDAY IN OREGON AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND LATE MONDAY, IN HOLLAND.

THERE WAS NO FALSE REPORT OF RUMORS IN UPI'S STORY---BUT REPORTERS LEARNED AGAIN THE STANDARD OBJECT LESSON TO DOUBLE CHECK THEIR SOURCES.

AND THEY WERE LEFT WONDERING AT THE DISTORTION AND PLAIN FALSEHOODS THAT SOMEHOW SEEM TO SPRING UP AT THE FIRST SIGNS OF PANIC.

-)-

ALTERNATE DAY LEAD FIREBALL

BY DONALD L. NEFF

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

LOS ANGELES, JAN. 17 (UPI)--A HUGE FIERY METEOR FLASHED ACROSS CALIFORNIA LAST NIGHT, TOUCHING OFF WIDESPREAD FEAR OF FIRES.

THE BRIGHT FLASH WAS SIGHTED FROM SAN DIEGO AT THE MEXICO BORDER TO NORTH OF SAN FRANCISCO, A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 600 MILES, AND AS FAR AS 300 MILES INLAND IN NEVADA.

IT WAS THE SECOND BRIGHT FLASH SIGHTED ON THE WEST COAST IN TWO NIGHTS AND IT BROUGHT ABOUT A SERIES OF NEAR-PANICKY REPORTS THAT FIRES WERE RAGING IN MUCH OF CALIFORNIA, CAUSED BY FALLING EMBERS.

OTHER REPORTS INCLUDED FINDINGS OF METAL PIECES SUPPOSEDLY DEBRIS FROM THE FIREBALL AND THE BELIEF THAT IT WAS A MISSILE OR SATELLITE BREAKING UP IN THE SKY.

ALL WERE FALSE.

ASTRONOMERS AT MOUNT WILSON OBSERVATORY IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SAID THEY BELIEVED IT TO BE A METEOR. THEY SAID PERIODIC SHOWERS OF METEORS WERE COMMON.

SOME HOURS AFTER THE FIREBALL FLASHED ACROSS CALIFORNIA ABOUT 6 P.M. PST, A SIMILAR BRIGHT FLASH WAS SIGHTED IN HOLLAND. IT ALSO WAS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN A METEOR BURNING UP IN THE EARTH'S SURFACE.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE METEOR IN CALIFORNIA AND THE RESULTANT SPREAD OF WILD RUMORS AND BEGINNINGS OF PANIC PROVIDED A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF HOW PANIC STARTS.

(PICKUP 4TH PGH: IT WAS)

LL541AES