

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

... for a field that is composed of individuals who profess to be intrigued by aerial anomalies, there is widespread ignorance about even the most basic characteristics or sources like meteors, ad planes, and balloons.

Allan Hendry , The UFO Handbook

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Merry Christmas UFology

Cover: The photograph shows the International Space Station (ISS) passing behind trees. The ISS recently has played a role in a video being promoted by some UFO proponents. They have tried to deny it was the ISS but investigation by others and myself have shown the object was the ISS. The quote at the bottom is applicable to this case.

Left: The recent news about a government UFO program between 2007 and 2012 had UFOlogists celebrating. However, the results of that program were the same as Blue Book. They had lots of puzzling cases but nothing to show for it.

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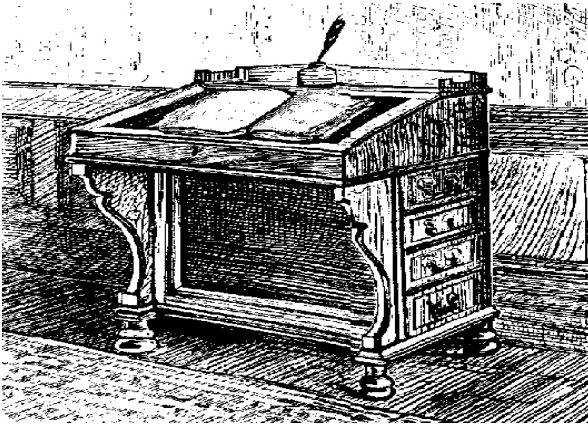
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Just prior to Christmas, the news media published a UFOlogical bombshell that had many proponents celebrating. According to the reports, the "Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program" (AATIP) had studied UFOs between the years 2007 and 2012. This study was the brainchild of then Senate Majority leader Harry Reid and UFO enthusiast Robert Bigelow. Bigelow, who contributed to Reid's campaign, managed to receive a large portion of the 22 million dollars allocated to the program so he could research the subject and provide data to the AATIP. Around the same time Bigelow received these funds, he allocated money to MUFON so they could form a rapid response team to study UFOs. MUFON's program lasted about a year and their funding was less than a half-million dollars. Assuming that Bigelow received the entire twenty-two million dollars, where did the rest of the money go? One statement in the NY times stated he used some of the funds to upgrade his buildings to store metallic artifacts recovered by the program and his contractors. This is news to everyone, including scientists, who might be interested in such materials. Are there alien metals in the hands of Bigelow Aerospace or did Bigelow use the money to make necessary repairs to his own properties under the guise that he needed to upgrade them to store possibly exotic materials? I suspect these materials, if they exist at all, could probably fill a single room. Nobody has ever reported finding large quantities of materials at UFO sightings that would require a hanger-sized building. In my opinion, the US government funded a Bigelow boondoggle and got very little in return. UFO proponents were outraged in the 1960s about the US government spending a half-million dollars on the Condon study. Where is the outrage from the UFO community today when Richard Bigelow received millions of dollars to simply forward data obtained by amateur UFO organizations, like MUFON, to the US government? If Bigelow's data dump to the AATIP was based mostly on what was obtained from various UFO groups, UFOlogists should feel swindled.

Readers may have noticed that two of the authors for the NY times article, Leslie Kean and Ralph Blumenthal, had written an article about UFOs five years ago. In that article, they declared that it could be the case that the UFO skeptics were dreading. Those same UFO skeptics demonstrated, in a short period of time, that the videos showed nothing more than insects close to the camera. After much hand wringing, Kean wrote a response, which stated that she was going to ignore the skeptic's convincing arguments and, instead, sided with the CEFAA experts, who declared the objects anomalous. Kean, after consulting with CEFAA experts again, wrote another article last year about a new IR video from a Chilean Navy helicopter showing a mysterious object. Within a short period, skeptics again demonstrated CEFAA wrong and identified it as a distant airliner. Now we have another article by Kean and Blumenthal about UFOs. Once again, Kean was impressed by the reports but, based on her track record, can we really accept her word for it? So far, the only thing released are two videos of supposed anomalous objects recorded by fighter aircraft. As of this writing, nobody has even demonstrated that the videos originated from the Department of Defense. Without provenance, they are suspect. Robert Bigelow, being the primary source of information for the AATIP, might have obtained them from some unknown, and possibly questionable, source. Perhaps the reason the details regarding these videos is not being revealed is because Kean et. al. do not want a repeat of the two CEFAA videos. What would it say about the AATIP, with all its experts declaring these videos are proof of advanced aerial vehicles, if some "armchair skeptics" proved the objects were something mundane? Only time will tell but, in the meantime, beware those glittering jewels placed in UFology's Christmas stocking. Underneath that shiny exterior, they may just be lumps of coal.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



Paul Dean revealed some interesting testimony regarding the famous Westall school UFO case. He communicated with one of the teachers, who was there that day. Her comments were interesting and indicate that most of the case is more mythology than fact. Dean deserves praise for his diligence in this matter and discovering information that was important in understanding what really happened.

In October, the UFO Pragmatism Facebook group had a discussion about a 2014 MUFON case that appeared to be heavily researched and was declared one of the best cases of 2014. It involved several photographs taken from a moving car of a UFO. The report was extensive and IPACO had examined the images with no solution. Several in the group felt there was an obvious explanation that was overlooked. It did not take us long to discover that it probably was a spot on the windshield and the story seemed to be crafted to fit the photographs. It was a hoax. The evidence

was actually in the photographs themselves as pointed out by Paolo Bertotti, who was part of the discussion. Over a year ago, somebody else came to this same conclusion. While he was not the principle investigator, Robert Powell, being the science director for MUFON at the time, performed the photographic analysis. He asked for Tonio Cousyn's (IPACO) opinion and he thought the object was some distance from the camera, which agreed with Powell's assessment. When I contacted Antoine, he told me he did not consider the possibility that the object may have been close to the camera. Now that it has been shown the case is nothing more than a speck on a windshield, will MUFON publicly change the status of this case or will they quietly ignore the evidence?

Robert Sheaffer has pointed out that Tom DeLonge is posting all sorts of nonsense on the Internet. However, the instant somebody points out his claims are bogus, DeLonge promptly deletes them without apologizing. What this demonstrates is that DeLonge is incapable of differentiating between bunk and actual evidence. If this demonstrates how he runs his business, investors have to be crazy to waste their money on it.

Is it possible that the Alan Godfrey case has been solved? I am not 100% confident in this possible explanation but it is an interesting theory to explain the visual sighting.

It always amazes me how people want to create rather bizarre scenarios to explain UFO events that already have been satisfactorily explained. Rendlesham was debunked by Ian Ridpath long ago and it did not require plasmas and secret military craft using microwaves to explain everything else. Sometimes the simplest explanations are the most likely.

Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos and Wim van Utrecht released an on-line book called "Belgium in UFO photographs 1950-1988". It is a very well researched document and, best of all, it is free. I highly recommend that all the readers of SUNlite download and read this book.

Curt Collins dug up an interesting story written by Dr. Alan Conger regarding UFO sightings near Oak Ridge in the early 1950s. Conger states that he had flew a cluster of about a half-dozen helium balloons with a 6-foot aluminum strip as a prank. When they alerted their fellow scientists of the UFO they could see in the sky, it became serious business. The local radar station tracked it and fighters were sent up for interception. The joke had gotten out of hand so Conger, and his associate, chose not to tell anybody about it. It is hard to identify if any Blue Book file matches this case but it demonstrates that the possibility always exists that a UFO case might involve a prank/hoax that got out of hand.

Speaking of old hoax theories, Anthony Braglia posted his latest version of the Socorro hoax scenario he promoted long ago. I need not go over the problems I have with his writings, speculations, half-truths, and second hand testimony. Just read SUNlite 1-4 for my commentary on the matter. This is no different than his promotion of the Roswell slides. A lot of speculation and wild claims that are written in such a manner that makes it appear as factual. Despite having a witness, who claims to be one of the hoaxers, Braglia has yet to explain how the hoax was done and how one could make a balloon move against the wind. Both Robert Sheaffer and Kevin Randle commented on his article. This is another case of Caveat Emptor.

Kevin Randle then brought up another possible solution to the Socorro story. That being that Zamora essentially lied about everything. This would be the simplest possible hoax scenario. Robert Sheaffer added to this commentary and pointed out that because, it was a single witness event, the case was suspect. I always consider Hector Qunitanilla's observation to be most accurate. That being that the solution may lay in Zamora's head. One can interpret this multiple ways but I think Major Quintanilla was stating that the observations contained inaccuracies/exaggerations that prevented him from solving the case and not suggesting that Zamora made it all up. Because the observations by Zamora cannot be confirmed, I doubt that anybody will ever solve the case.

The New York Times and several other news outlets reported that the Defense Intelligence Agency had studied UFOs for about five years (2007-12). At first glance, it was some astonishing news. UFO proponents cheered that the US government cov-

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

er-up had finally been exposed and that it was only a matter of time before scientific evidence would be revealed. Missed in the celebrations was the fact that the program, called the "Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program" (AATIP), had been initiated not by the department of defense but by then Senate Majority leader, Harry Reid, who was influenced by Robert Bigelow, one of his campaign contributors and a UFO promoter. Worried that he could not get support in the Senate and to prevent public debate, Reid hid the funding for the program as if it were a black budget. The program then gave a bulk of their budget to Bigelow to conduct research. This kind of nepotism is often frowned upon but UFO proponents are ignoring it because they are hearing/reading what they want to hear. They missed the point that, despite spending 22 million dollars, the program learned nothing of significance. After five years, the funds dried up and the DOD canceled the program. According to Luis Elizondo, military leaders had little or no interest in the reports created by the AATIP. There were other claims that some in the DOD stopped the program based on religious beliefs. A more likely scenario is that military leaders, who had this program forced upon them by a politician, weren't interested in this program in the first place. The instant they got a chance, they canceled it because they considered it to be a waste of money.

Both Curt Collins and Jason Colavito added their commentary on the subject and painted a slightly different interpretation of the program than what one read in the news media. It seems that George Knapp, Robert Bigelow, and Harry Reid all had close ties to each other and had a common interest in the UFO subject. Luis Elizondo, who, according to his own statements, ran the AATIP, appears to have resigned just in time to be hired by Tom DeLonge for his "To the stars academy" (TTSA) business venture! Colavito points out that coincidentally, prior to Elizondo's resigning, DeLonge was talking to people in the DOD about UFOs. Who might that have been? Both individuals imply that this all appears to be a cash cow to fund Bigelow's personal interest in UFOs using taxpayer money. To top it off, the TTSA is now cashing in on the media blitz. There is nothing like free advertising to help out your business.

Robert Sheaffer reported that the 22 million dollars in 2010 cash was SEVEN times what the Condon Study was funded for (in 2010 dollars)! At least the Condon study produced an extensive report that was endorsed by the National Academy of Sciences. Politico reports that AATIP was good at producing "reams of paperwork" but not very good at producing any convincing evidence. According to George Knapp, there are something like three dozen reports documenting all the sightings, which were created by the AATIP. So far, all we have seen are two aircraft videos and we are not even sure about those since they have no provenance. If Kean and Knapp have examined these reports, as they imply, why aren't they being published? Based on what we have seen so far, and what we know about Bigelow's passion for UFO stories, I wonder if this collection of reports will contain anything significant. Will the AATIP be labeled a 22 million dollar fiasco as more is revealed?

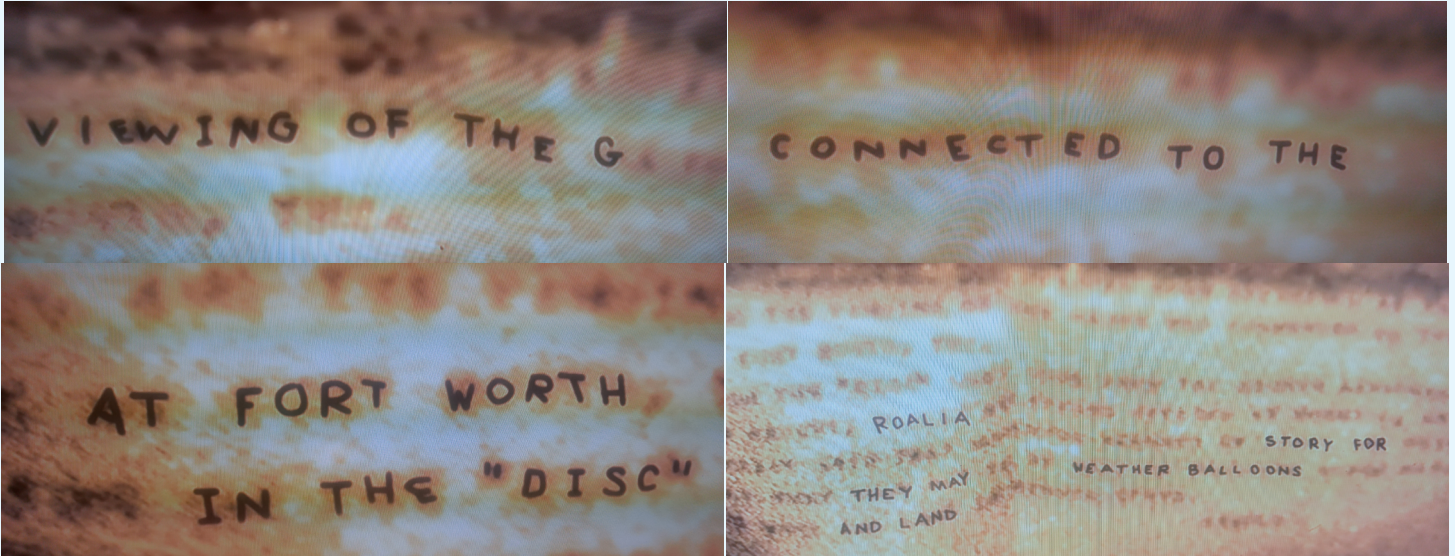
As this story all broke another fighter aircraft video surfaced showing a UFO pursuit. This one accompanied a NY times article where the Nimitz F-18 pilot told his story about spotting a UFO and attempting to intercept it in 2004. The TTSA web site indicates the video is one of those cases that they found truly puzzling but does not state that the video was taken during that specific event. Mick West, and his group at Metabunk, looked at the video and determined that it probably was an airplane or, possibly, a target that was not moving very much at all! While the video does not contain the position of the aircraft or any date or time, it does provide data that can be analyzed. Metabunk has made an extraordinary effort at looking at possibilities that have been ignored by most of the UFO aficionados, who were cheering this as some great scientific evidence. I have to question either of the two videos as being related to the 2004 incident. The pilot, CDR Fravor, describes an attempted intercept where he is descending and traveling in a circle. The UFO then ascended from low altitude where he attempted an intercept, which resulted in the object's rapid departure. The Gimbal video appears to show something like this but the plane is at 25,000 feet and just in a slow bank. In the Nimitz FLIR video, the display shows the plane and target flying straight and level at 20,000 feet. The only motion of the target happens at the end of the video, when the operator switches back and forth between 1.0X to 2.0X Zoom and the FLIR heading is changing at a rate of about 1 degree every 4 seconds to the left. At this point the target lock is broken and the object moves rapidly to the left. It appears that the rapid motion has more to do with the loss of target lock than actual motion of the target. As in the Gimbal video, the witness' story and the video do not appear to match. The only argument I have seen that attempts to explain this is that the video comes from another aircraft that saw the event from a different angle. This still does not match the story because the object is always at 20,000 feet and the pursuing F-18 is not visible. It appears that neither video is related to the 2004 event unless somebody can prove it. Robert Sheaffer talked to IR expert John Lester Miller, who agreed with Mick West and felt both of the videos showed aircraft. He was also concerned about the low quality of the video. The Navy may have only provided poor copies of the videos to AATIP but that seems unlikely. A more likely possibility is that the videos originated from Bigelow, who acquired them from another source, which created a poor copy of the originals or manipulated them. Until somebody demonstrates where the videos actually came from, they are nothing more than a curiosity and prove absolutely nothing.

There also was the claim that there are UFOlogical metal alloys that Bigelow Aerospace supposedly is analyzing. One of the NY Times authors, Ralph Blumenthal, said that they were being evaluated and nobody could figure out how they were made. Rafi Letzter, of the Live Science blog, asked chemists and metallurgists to comment on this. They essentially stated that there isn't a metallic alloy in existence that could not be evaluated. If this is accurate, that means those at Bigelow's research facility are failing to do the task for which they received money from the US government. I suspect that most, if not all, of these samples are earthly alloys that UFO proponents have picked up near an alleged UFO events and have promoted as artifacts. Since nothing has been revealed about these samples, skeptics have every right to question their existence or the analyses performed upon them.

The Roswell Corner

The Ramey Memo reading

I watched the recent program "Expedition unknown: Hunt for extraterrestrials" (Episode 4: Roswell revealed), where Michael Primeau performed his analysis of the Ramey Memo. These are images from the show that demonstrate what he had confidence in reading:



It is important to note that he felt that "disc" might also be "rise". Many of these words are consistent with what has been deciphered in the past. However, the "Viewing of the G (or C)....." stood out as differing significantly from what the proponents of the memo have been championing for over a decade. They had read it as "Victims of the wreck", which implied a crash of some kind. A minority have suggested "remains" and "finding(s)" as well as "viewing".

Adam Dew interview

Kevin Randle interviewed Adam Dew about his involvement in the Roswell slides. There was not much in the way of new information. Some points that were mentioned by Dew:

- Schmitt and Carey are not telling the truth. Dew has video of them examining all the slides and images. When they say they never saw the full slides, as they have been stating recently, they are lying.
- After attempting to keep Tony Bragalia quiet, Dew realized he would never be able to do this. As a result, he let Bragalia run wild because he was generating publicity. Dew also stated that Bragalia gave out false information. Kevin Randle apparently agreed that Bragalia had a habit of saying things that were not true.
- Robert Shanebrook "freaked out" when Bragalia contacted him (Bragalia complained that Lance Moody had done this). Dew had to calm him down so he could get him to look at the slides.
- Tony Bragalia sent an e-mail to Dew threatening him not to finish his Kodachrome film (For everyone's information, this is standard for Bragalia. I have received multiple threatening e-mails over the years).
- The term "Roswell slides" did not originate with him and he believed it was a "naysayer", who started using the term. I researched this a bit and discovered that the earliest use of the term appears to have been Nick Redfern in September of 2013. He wrote a piece called "The Roswell Slides: My Perspective". The term was then used by Rich Reynolds in January of 2014. I first used the term in SUNlite 6-2, published in March of 2014, when I was speculating about dating the slide(s) using the edge code.
- He was concerned that the testimony of Eleazar Benavides would be nullified by his involvement in the BeWitness program. IMO, one has to question Benavides' story since he could not tell the difference between the mummy and an actual alien body. I have always been skeptical of his story for various reasons that I have listed before.

Dew seemed intent on setting the record straight from his perspective. I give him credit for answering all of Randle's questions. He also seemed to be disappointed in the Roswell Slides Research Group (RSRG) because none of us seemed interested in appearing in his film. I can't speak for the rest of the group but the comments directed at our group by him, and his buddy Beason, left me with an unfavorable opinion of them. I felt I could not be a participant in his film without appearing bitter.

International Space Station or mysterious orb?

In SUNlite 9-5, I noted in the "Who's blogging" section a video that had been circulating as evidence of an orb. I also noted that Scott Brando had explained it as a video of the International Space Station (ISS). In response, the witnesses chose to dispute this solution by presenting an extensive video rebuttal.

The event

Squamish BC - Giant Orb Goes into Forest - July 22, 2017 - MUFON Case #85446



The video surfaced on August 3rd, where a coast-to-coast AM article declared it a "mystifying orb".¹ According to the MUFON UFO report filed by the witnesses:

We were just east of Squamish, BC, Canada on the Mamquam River Forest Service Road just north of "The Chief", a granite monolith, the second biggest in the world of this kind, which is considered sacred by the local indigenous people.

We went there because, in speaking with local people earlier that day, they said orbs have been spotted in the past over & near the mountain. We had driven around the whole area to find this somewhat private spot to view the mountain.

I had turned the recording off on all the cameras to check the batteries, how much was left on the cards, etc & was just casually standing around talking to the others when one member of our group said "Is that a plane?" It was exactly 10:59 PM.

So just in case it wasn't a plane, I went to the tripod quickly, hit the record button of the night vision scope fast & found the object in the screen .. there wasn't any time to turn to do anything else, like hitting the record button of the other cameras on the tripod as I wanted to make sure to keep my eye on the screen of the NV & follow it .. as it turned out there was only 10 secs of video captured of the object before it totally disappeared into the deep woods.

While I watched it go across the sky evenly & on a straight path & into the woods, I noticed right away that trees in the foreground blocked out the light, while the trees behind the orb were lit up very brightly. You can hear me in the video saying "oh", because when I saw the trees behind it being lit, and there was no sound, I knew this was no airplane.

We were all quite excited & exhilarated over what we had seen & replayed the video many times to study it & confirm to ourselves that we had something special here.²

The witnesses were Rob Freeman and Marcus McNabb, who specialize in recording aerial anomalies. They described themselves as filmmakers and seemed to have quite an array of equipment. Unfortunately, only one camera recorded the event.

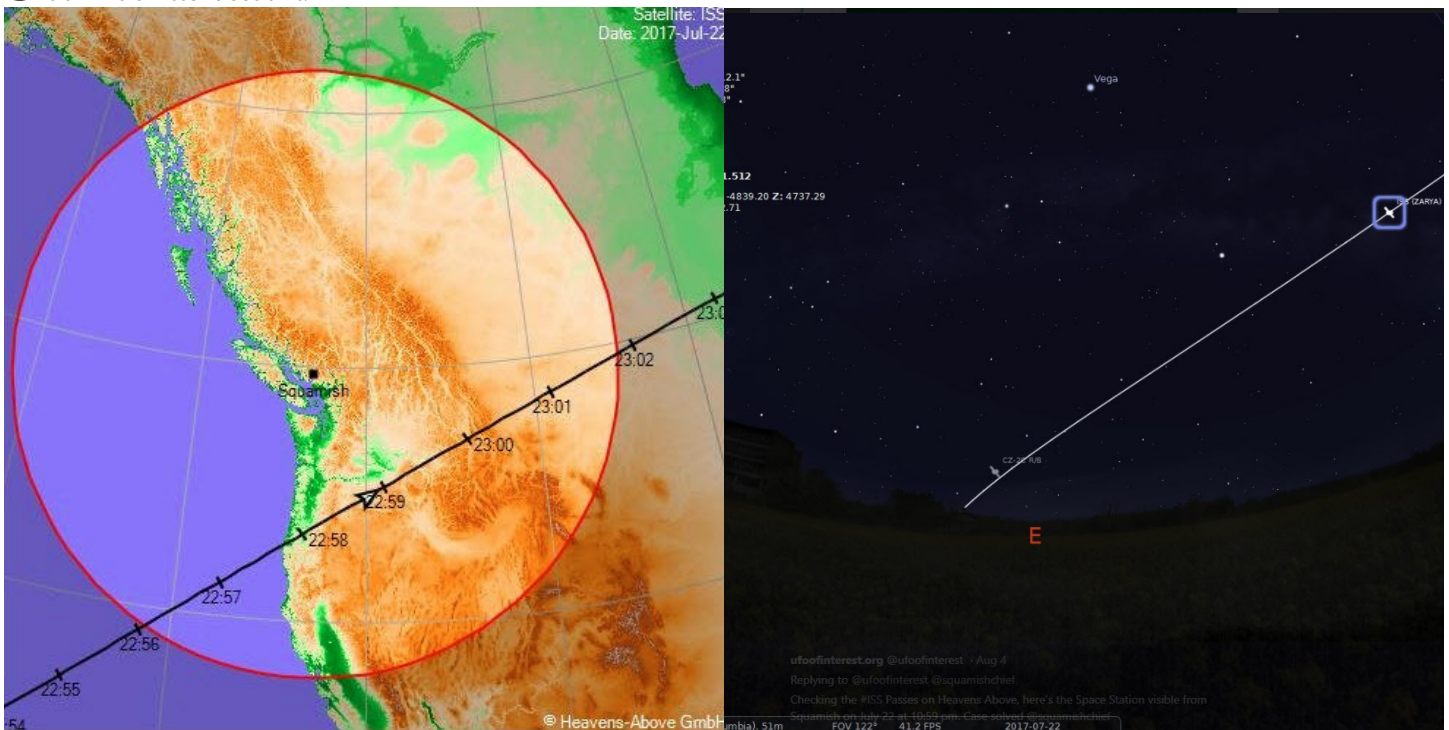
The Coast-to-Coast article added that an expert had determined that it could not be identified:

A seasoned skywatcher from the area, Charles Lamoureux, examined the footage and concluded that the light did not come from any obvious source such as a drone, meteor, or satellite.³

This all sounded pretty good but, when I saw the video I suspected that it was not extraordinary. Others did as well and were quick to identify the source of the “orb”.

The explanation

Scott Brando, who runs the “UFO of interest” blog/facebook site, quickly identified the object as the ISS a day later and announced it on his twitter account.⁴



At the time, I felt that Scott had a valid argument and mentioned it in SUNlite 9-5. However, those that recorded the object disagreed and began a campaign to sell the idea to their followers that the ISS was an impossible explanation.

The rebuttal

It seems that UFO videographers rarely, if ever, accept explanations for their UFO videos once they had promoted them as something that was not mundane. Rob Freeman responded to Brando and stated that top experts at MUFON were going to evaluate the film. He also argued that the orb was not behind the mountains but had disappeared into the trees because the trees were being illuminated by the orb. This rebuttal really did not have any teeth because when the ISS is bright, it can illuminate the surrounding area of the sky. The amplification of this light by the night vision equipment can make it appear that the trees were being illuminated by the “orb”.

Wanting to put the ISS explanation to bed, Freeman produced a video demonstrating it was not the ISS.⁵ Freeman states he used two different Apps to demonstrate that on the night in question (July 22nd), the ISS started its trek across the sky at 2237 PM PDT at an azimuth of 216 degrees. At 2242 PM PDT, the azimuth of the ISS was 145 degrees and its elevation was 25 degrees. It then proceeded to the east and was at azimuth 74 degrees at 2247 PM PDT. Freeman then showed the location the “orb” was seen at an azimuth of around 125 degrees and an elevation of about 33-35 degrees using a phone theodolite application.

One of the things that struck me as odd as how Freeman had determined, using two different applications, that the ISS had been traversing the sky at a different time than Scott Brando had done when he attempted to debunk the video. His track, which he had acquired from Stellarium, showed the ISS in the vicinity at 2259 and not 2242 as mentioned by Freeman. One of the tracks was wrong but which.

The rebuttal debunked

It is not hard to determine which track was wrong and most satellite observers could easily explain the difference. When Freeman was using his applications, it was September 10th. Any Application running on a phone or computer would use the Two Line Elements (TLEs) that were applicable on that date. The TLEs for satellites vary due to atmospheric drag. Every so often the space station has to boost its orbit to compensate for this. This also changes the TLEs. Therefore, Freeman's track was probably wrong because the applications he was using were set for the September 10 TLE. Brando's track, which was computed using TLEs on August 4, would probably have been much closer to the actual track.

To check this, I ran the TLEs for the ISS from July 21 and September 10.⁶ These are the elements and the track across the sky they produce on July 22, 2017 using Heavensat:

Sep 10

1 25544U 98067A 17252.56373843 .00009353 00000-0 14825-3 0 9999

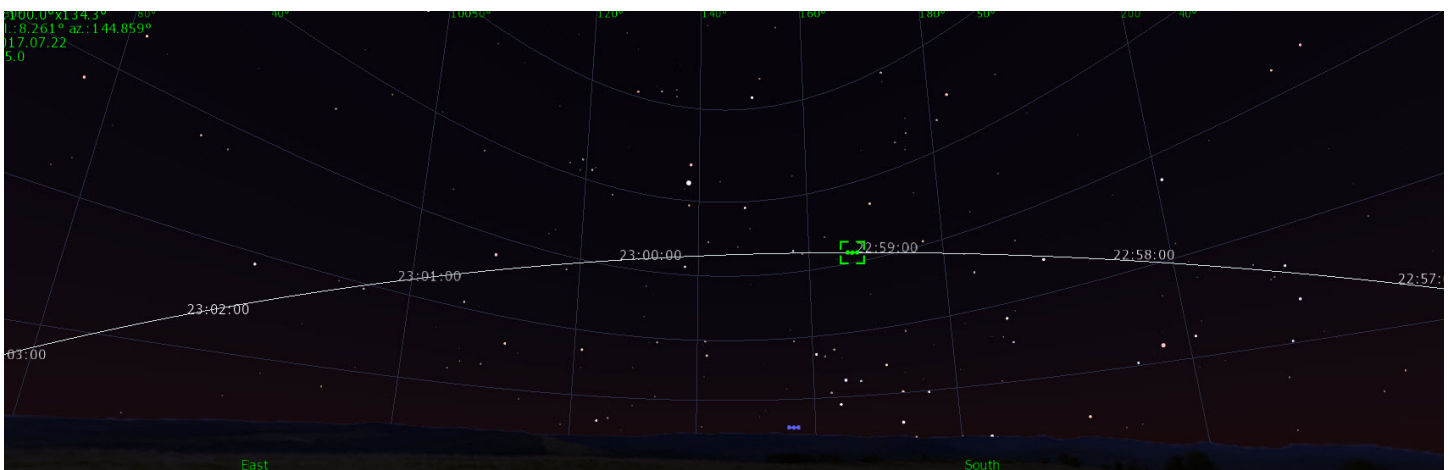
2 25544 051.6436 337.7004 0004095 249.4830 311.3852 15.54147063074874



July 21

1 25544U 98067A 17201.43406506 .00002449 00000-0 44162-4 0 9999

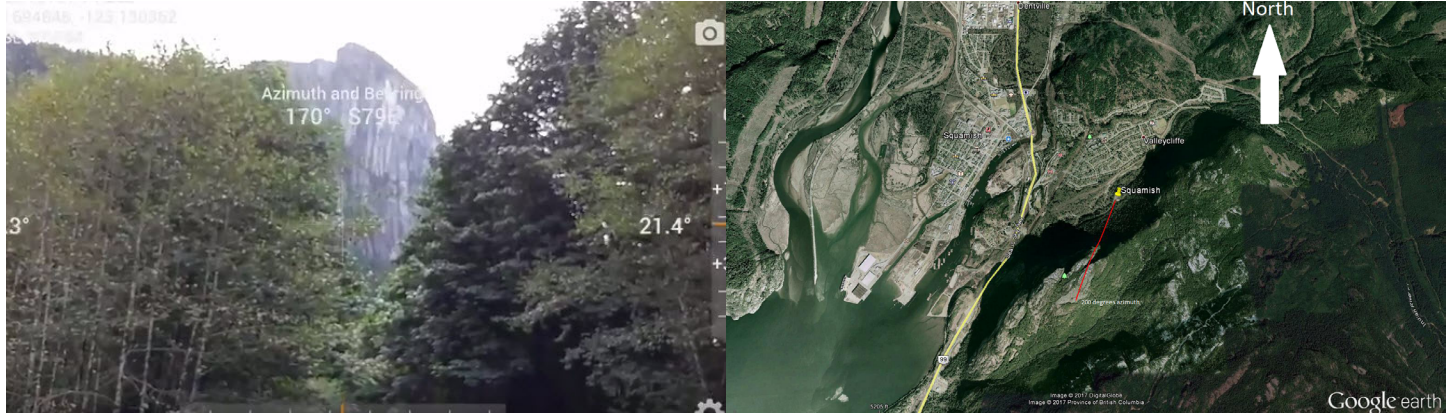
2 25544 051.6413 232.5972 0006134 054.2289 086.9127 15.54191876066929



The July 21 track closely matches the track published by Scott Brando and the September 10 TLEs is similar to the track mentioned by Freeman. There is a difference but this is probably due to his Applications using TLEs from a few days prior to September 10. TLEs from September 8 produced a track that was closer to the one he described.

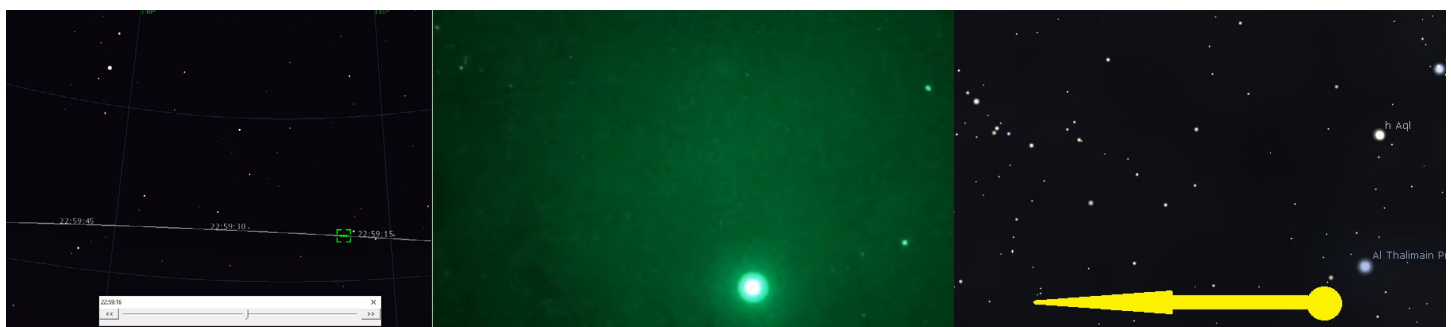
The important thing to consider here is that the July 21 TLE track shows the ISS passing very close to the position in the sky around

the same time as the object recorded in the video! According to this track, the ISS passed by the azimuth of 125 degrees around 2300 PM PDT at an elevation of around 31 degrees. Considering the margin of error for the time of the event (within one minute of the sighting time) and the elevation angle (within a few degrees of the elevation angle), it is too close to ignore. The differences can be accounted for due to changes in the ISS orbit between July 21 and 22, the position of the camera in Freeman's video not being in the same exact location as his cameras on July 22, Variations in the Heavensat program, and potential errors in his theodolite app.



In order to see the margin of error in his theodolite app, I checked it against Google Earth and his position. The values were not even close. The azimuth for the Peak, using Google Earth and his position, was about 200 degrees. However, his app shows the azimuth to be 169 degrees.⁷ This makes it an azimuth error of about 30 degrees. If we add that error to his position for the orb pass, we discover the actual azimuth was about 155 degrees. The ISS was at this azimuth at 22:59:18. Suddenly, the errors that were discussed above became very small. We now had a difference of 18 seconds and not one minute. Additionally, the ISS was at a higher point in its trajectory. The elevation angle was just under 33 degrees (Heavensat lists it as 32.9 degrees). This roughly matched the elevation angle above the ridge that Freeman had measured using his phone application.

The new azimuth also explained another anomaly I had in trying to determine the star field the object was passing through. With an azimuth of 125 degrees, the star field would have been in the Delphinus/Aquarius region. Try as I might, I could not find the stars in the video. I assumed this was because the field of view was too small and the brighter stars were not as bright as they appeared. With the new azimuth the star field problem resolved itself.



The bright star the orb initially passed near was lambda Aquila. Its azimuth and elevation at 225916 local time was 157.3 degrees and about 33 degrees. When one compares the surrounding star field with that star, many of them fall into place. The only differences probably had a lot to do with the performance of the night vision instrument. The above images show the position of the ISS at 225916 (left) and the star field using Stellarium with the "orb" and its direction of motion one can see in the video. To me this is very convincing evidence that proves the original conclusion drawn by Scott Brando. There is little doubt that the "orb" was the ISS.

Conclusion

It is amazing that Mr. Freeman, and his associates, could not figure this out. They proclaim themselves to be experts on things visible at night but this demonstrates they are far from it. One of the first things one does is plot an objects path across the night sky. Once that plot is complete, others can evaluate what has been seen if they could not identify it. Instead, they did not bother to figure out azimuth and elevation until over a month later. Even when they did that, they got it wrong because they were reliant on technology they did not understand instead of simply looking at a map.

I am also wondering why the huge camera array being used by Freeman did not record the event or, if they did, why these videos were not presented. Is it possible that there are other videos of the object that don't quite show the object as exotic as it appears in the night vision video?



This all reminds me of something Alan Hendry once observed:

... for a field that is composed of individuals who profess to be intrigued by aerial anomalies, there is widespread ignorance about even the most basic characteristics or sources like meteors, ad planes, and balloons.

Despite all of Mr. Freeman's technical expertise and equipment, he appears ignorant of basic astronomy. He gave no plot of the UFOs path despite seeing it real time and then compounded this error by not understanding that the orbit of the ISS changes over time. Freeman should have been curious as to why his track and Brando's track were different but any curiosity was apparently ignored in favor of trying to reinforce his belief that he recorded something exotic. His argument failed due to confirmation bias.

Of course, this raises serious questions about Freeman's, and his associate's, research. Can we really consider anything they present as something that was thoroughly researched?

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Feb 6 1953 Rosalia, Washington

The NICAP document states:

February 6, 1953--Rosalia, Wash. USAF bomber reported a circling UFO. [III]¹

Section III does not provide much. It is part of a table with the following comment:

Circling UFO with flashing lights.^{[40]²}

The source of the information comes from USAF intelligence reports. However, there is no follow-up on the sighting. It is just a listing of a case.

Blue Book evaluation

While the source listed in the UFO evidence indicates it came from USAF files, the Blue Book file contains a bit more information than this³. The light was first seen passing underneath the B-36, which was headed north towards Fairchild AFB. The plane then went into a descending 180 degree turn. They noted the light, which was flashing, was circling and then headed south. There is no indication of what happened after that. The Best Evidence document implied the light was circling the B-36 but that is not what the report states. It merely states the light was circling when observed.

The time of the event was at 0913Z, which leads us to the possible source of this sighting. Blue Book indicated a balloon was released from Spokane at 0900Z and reported winds from 270 to 280 degrees around 10,000 feet. The data sheet they provided for this balloon is hard to read and indicated the winds below 1000m were from the WSW. There is no other data beyond the first two minutes of ascension.

The NOAA ESRL Database has records for two other weather balloons, which were launched at 0300Z and 1500Z⁴:

Altitude	0300Z Dir	0300Z spd	1500Z Dir	1500Z spd
722M	68	2	203	8
1000M	135	10	248	8
1500M	180	17	315	19
2000M	203	17	315	27
3000M	248	19	315	48
4000M	248	23	315	52

The 722m reading was the ground level for the airport. The winds appeared to be shifting from the southwest to the northwest between 0300 and 1500Z. This indicates that the direction given by Blue Book was probably accurate. The 1500Z balloon indicates it is possible the 0900Z balloon might have encountered winds from the northwest at some point.

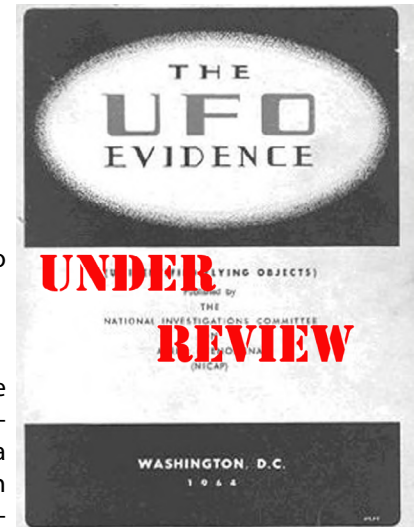
Blue Book attempted to make the calculations to explain how the balloon made it to the location listed in the report. However, they made several errors. The biggest was using the wind values for 10,000 feet to measure the distance the balloon traveled. While the winds at 10,000 feet (3000m) were probably at 50 knots (the 1500Z reading was 48), the balloon was not propelled by these winds the entire time it was airborne. It probably was only 3-10 NM to the ESE of the airport.

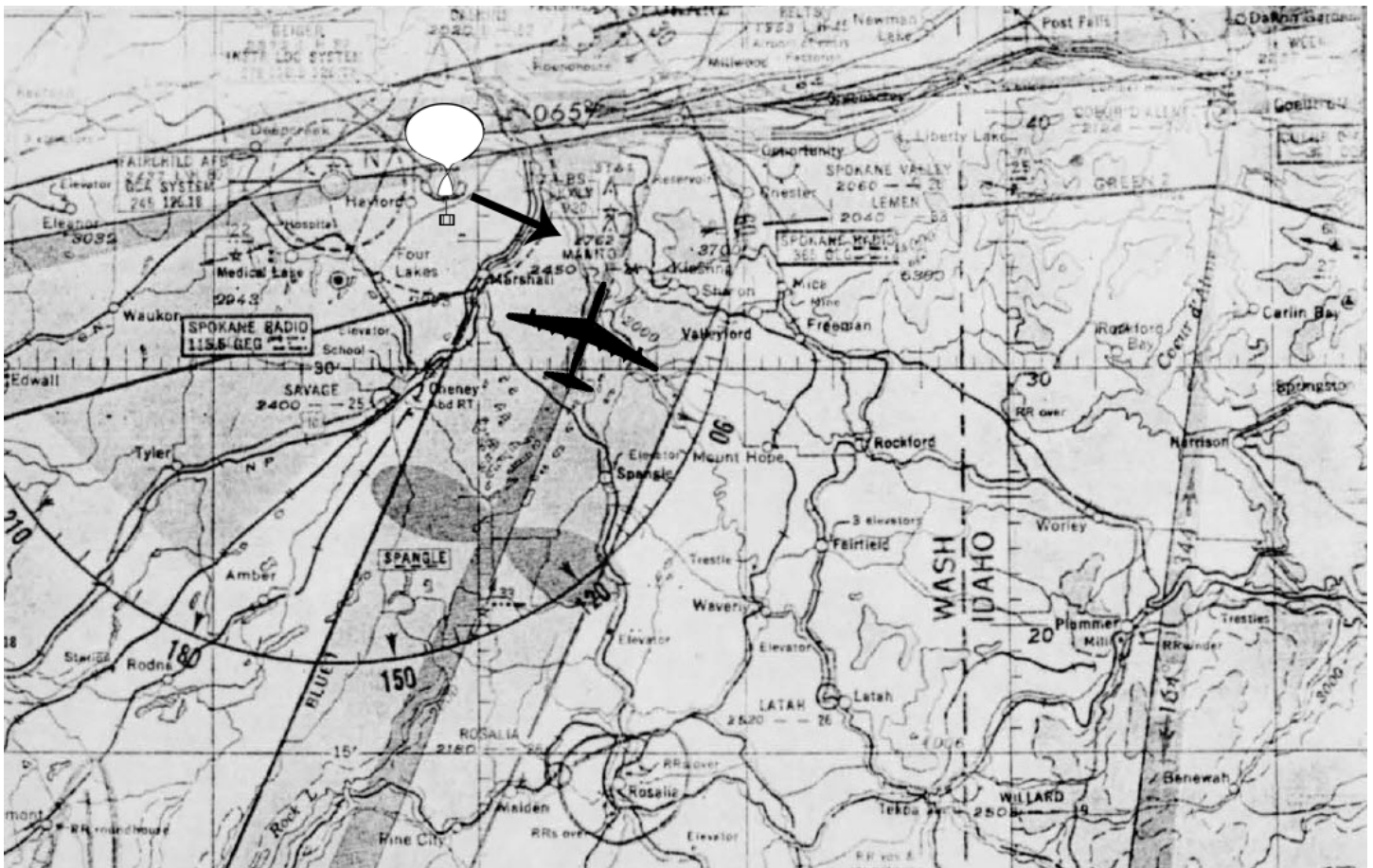
This brings us to the location of the aircraft. Many of the reports list the location as near Rosalia, Washington. This is not accurate because IR-133-53 describes the track of the aircraft:

*AF2708 was inbound, approximately 10 to 15 miles out on South leg of the Spokane radio range (inbound course 1 deg magnetic), at the time of the sighting, descending from 10,000 to 7,000 feet. During sighting aircraft turned to proceed toward Rosalia, Washington (47 deg 20' N, 117 deg 30' W).*⁵

All the other reports list this longitude and latitude as the location of the sighting. What the report actually meant was the plane turned south towards Rosalia (which was located at 47 deg 20' N, 117 deg 30' W) but the UFO disappeared. The actual approximate location was more towards the north and closer to the airfield. If we use the 10 nautical miles from the Spokane radio (located just south of Felts Field east of downtown Spokane) and the actual airway the plane was located upon (001 degree magnetic heading), the plane's location was about halfway between Cheney and Valleyford, WA (about 47 deg 30' N, 117 deg 20' W). This is about 11 nm Southeast of the location where the balloon had been launched (See diagram on next page).⁶

Could the balloon have reached that location? It is difficult to say but there are factors that could have allowed it to reach the location and altitude where the B-36 was located. The balloon could have had a slower ascent rate than expected. It could also have been launched five minutes earlier or encountered winds a bit faster than expected. The balloon could also have deviated towards the southeast at some point. The 1500Z wind readings support a southeast course at 1500 meters. Additionally, we are not sure if the exact time of the event was precisely at 0913Z. Could it have been 0914 or 0915Z? These are variables that have to be consid-





ered. The one fact that cannot be ignored is that a balloon had been launched around the time of the incident. It seems possible that the balloon might have been in the vicinity of the B-36 at the time of the incident

The observed effects of the light circling after the B-36 passed probably had to do with the turbulence of the aircraft causing the balloon to oscillate in the eddy currents of the aircraft's wake. According to the Blue Book record, there was a cloud deck at 9000 feet. The B-36 made its turn and probably saw the balloon for a short period of time and it then rose into the clouds. It had mysteriously disappeared.

Solved?

All of the effects observed indicates the flashing light behaved like a balloon and there are records a balloon was in the area. There is no reason to discount this as a probable balloon sighting. The case should be classified as a probable balloon. Because of this solution, this sighting should not be considered Best Evidence.

Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 133
2. *ibid*. P. 21
3. "Blue Book case file 6 February 1953". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9550941>
4. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA/ESRL Radiosonde Database. Available WWW: <https://ruc.noaa.gov/raobs/>
5. "IR-133-53: Unidentified flying object sighted near Spokane, Washington" Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9550987>
6. "Aeronautical chart for Spokane Washington region" Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9551112>

THE 701 CLUB:

CASE 2490: HACKETTSTOWN, N. J. MARCH 11, 1953

Don Berliner's describes the case as follows:

March 11, 1953; Hackettstown, New Jersey. 4 a.m. Witness: Mrs. Nina Cook, an experienced private pilot and wife of a Pan Am flight engineer. A large light, blinking at 10-15 times per minute, moved up and down along a mountain range.¹

Brad Sparks states:

March 10-11, 1953. Hackettstown, New Jersey. 4 [2?] a.m. (EST). Mrs. Nina Cook, an experienced private pilot and wife of a Pan Am flight engineer, saw a large light, blinking at 10-15 times per minute, move up and down along a mountain range. Earlier sighting at 9 p.m.²

These descriptions really don't reflect the whole story because Mrs. Cook saw two more UFOs that night that had potential explanations, which makes one question the sighting that made it onto the 701 list.

The Blue Book file

The Blue Book file really does not exist. There is no record card or Blue Book investigation. However, there is a document in the system that describes the case. It is an Office of Special Investigations (OSI) report that documents an interview with the witness conducted by special investigator George Wertz.³

On March 16th, a friend of the witness had called OSI about the incident and told them that the witness had reported the incident to the Civil defense authorities. He gave a description of the event, which promoted an interview be conducted with the primary witness on March 17th.

The Sequence of events

Mrs Cook stated the sightings began at 2100, when she saw, out her kitchen window, an orange round object that was "as high as the lowest stars and four times larger than the largest star". Over the next ten minutes, the orange ball would change its color from orange to red to white, and then greenish-blue. The light was blinking about 10-15 cycles per minute. This ball appeared to be traveling north to south but then headed northwest. It also began to lose altitude. After about an hour the object disappeared in the direction of the Delaware Water Gap, which was marked by an aircraft beacon light.

The witness added that, after the object had disappeared, a bright column of light came up from the ground in the vicinity of the Delaware Water Gap. This effect had been witnessed by her 13-year old son.

The report states Nina Cook went to bed at 2045 (which was probably an error of some kind) but then woke up at 2400 because she was upset about the 2100 sighting. She observed a similar object that blinked, changed color, and appeared to move along the Kittinney mountain range. After ten minutes, she went back to bed only to wake up again at 0400.

The 0400 sighting was very much like the 2100 and 2400 sightings. Mrs. Cook saw a bright object that was over the Kittinney mountain range, which appeared to move along the range, blink, and change color.

OSI investigation

The OSI investigation was interesting as it had an investigator actually asking probing questions regarding the witness' observations. They noted that the husband was skeptical of his wife's observations but did not doubt her sincerity. He also stated that she was not subject to illusions and their son had confirmed the sighting of the light column. A neighbor revealed that Mrs. Cook had called them around 2200 that night and gave them an account of what she saw.

Agent Wentz also discovered that a new toll bridge was being constructed in the vicinity of the Delaware Water Gap and that the area was illuminated by floodlights that sometimes swept into the sky. Mrs. Cook stated that she did not see a floodlight. Additionally investigations by Wentz revealed that Hackettstown lay directly beneath an air traffic lane used by aircraft flying east-west from Newark Airport.

Blue Book

Unfortunately, there is nothing in the Blue Book files mentioning their investigation. All we know is that in the monthly summary, the cases was listed as⁴:

1. Astro (Venus)
2. Astro (star/planet)
3. Unidentified

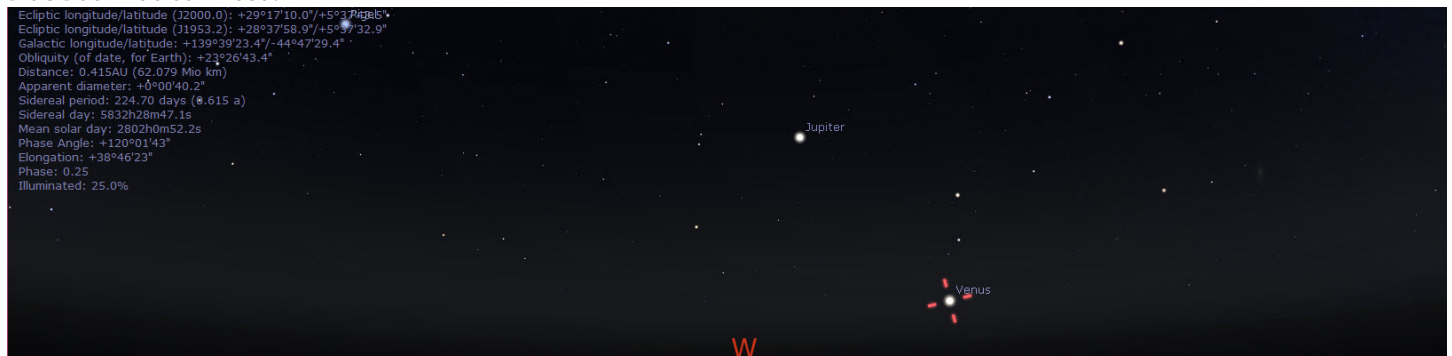
My evaluation

Anytime a witness starts talking about lights at night changing color and moving slowly in a westerly/northwesterly direction, I begin to think the witness was viewing an astronomical object that was scintillating and setting. Blue Book apparently had the

same approach when they classified the sighting.

The first sighting was at 2100, which Blue Book declared was the planet Venus. The direction the witness was observing was towards the Delaware Water Gap. Based on Google Earth, this direction was between 290 and 310 degrees azimuth (but this could be greater depending on what the witness had defined as this direction). We don't know the witness' exact location of the witness because everything is redacted. However, we know her home was on top of a hill, which gave her a pretty clear view of the horizon.

2100 sighting - Venus was setting in the west at 2100. It was azimuth 288 degrees at 2100 and, when it set at 2122, it was at an azimuth of 292 degrees. It is the brightest celestial object and would have fit the description made by Mrs. Cook. The witness states the object was visible for approximately an hour but then stated she went to bed at 2045, which is before the event happened. We also have neighbor saying they were called around 2200, when the witness described what she had seen. All of this brings into question exactly when she saw what. I suspect the sighting was centered around 2100. It probably lasted about an hour but it may have started before 2100 and ended before 2200. This would indicate that Venus is the probable explanation for this sighting as Blue Book had surmised.

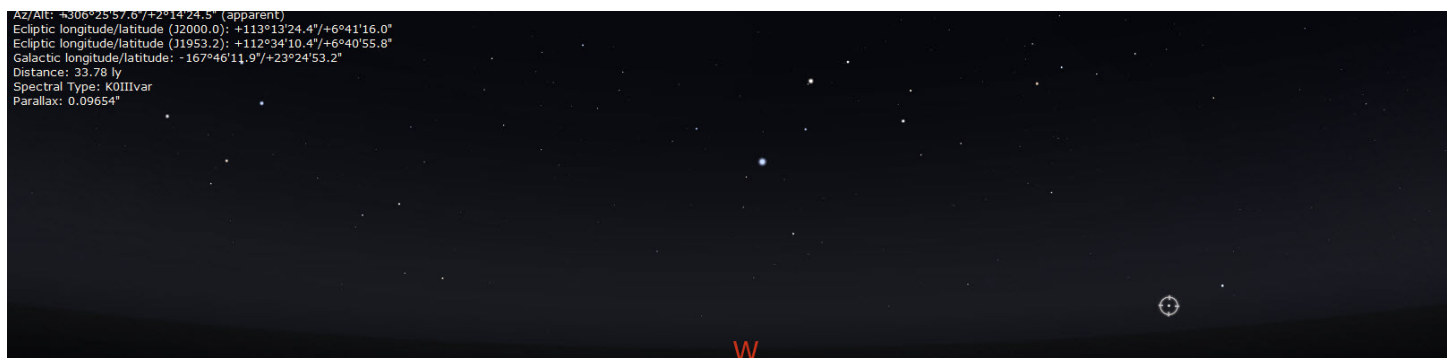


The light beam described by the witness was probably just a floodlight being used at the bridge construction site as noted by agent Wertz.

2400 sighting - The witness reported the time of the sighting as 2400 but I have to wonder if it wasn't sooner. Jupiter was setting around 2245 at an azimuth of 291 degrees. To me this would have been a likely source of this second sighting. However, if one was a stickler for the 2400 time frame, we have another candidate. The bright star Aldebaran (magnitude 0.85) was only 2 degrees above the horizon at azimuth 289 degrees. Either is a good candidate for this sighting.



0400 sighting - Once again, we have to wonder about the time frame of the sighting. Brad Sparks gives a question mark of 0200 but I see no reason to use that time since there is no indication in the Wentz interview that Mrs. Cook hinted at this time. The 0400 provides use with some more first magnitude stars low on the West-Northwest horizon. The bright star Pollux (magnitude 1.15) was at an azimuth of 306 degrees and only 2 degrees elevation. The star Regulus was also visible in the west at an elevation of about 15 degrees but that seems to be less likely than Pollux, which was much closer to the horizon.



Solved?

To me this case is nothing more than the witness misperceiving stars. Venus, a prominent IFO, sparked the witness' interest in what was happening as she started in the distance out her window. Not once was the planet Venus mentioned in conjunction with the UFO, which means the initial sighting was likely Venus. With a sudden interest in what was happening over near the Delaware water gap, Mrs. Cook kept going to her window, hoping to see if the UFO was returning. She found her UFO each time when she saw bright stars scintillating as they got close to the horizon. In my opinion, the 0400 sighting can be classified as "probably the star Pollux".

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook Unknowns". NICAP Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. Sparks, Brad. Comprehensive Catalog of 1,700 Project Blue Book UFO Unknowns: Database Catalog Not a Best Evidence List –NEW: List of Projects & Blue Book Chiefs Work in Progress Version 1.26. Jan. 31, 2016. P. 175
3. "Office of special investigation report 24-337 dtd 25 Mar 1953". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/12204533>
4. "List of sightings 10-19 March 1953" Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9668157>

Project Blue Book case review: January - June 1953

This is a new column, where I examine a section of Project Blue and determine if they got the explanations correct. This was done in the 1970s by the staff at CUFOS but they never gave details about their efforts other than a final total. While this seems to be a monumental task, I felt that I could make the attempt if I paced myself. After reviewing the January 1953 cases, I felt that it would not be too difficult to evaluate a three to six month time period in each issue of SUNlite. In order to avoid being mired in the large number of cases in 1952, I decided to start with 1953. It is my desire to eventually examine all the cases in the system but it is going to take some time.

I began my analysis by examining the information in the file to see if the explanation had merit. If it did not, and I felt there was another explanation or classification, I entered my evaluation. I briefly expanded on the cases I reclassified in a separate table. If I felt the case had no explanation and there was enough data available to evaluate the case, I reclassified it as UNIDENTIFIED. This happened on several occasions. If the object was one of the 701 unidentifieds, I did not bother to look at them since that is part of my 701 club column. The only time an evaluation for an UNIDENTIFIED is given is when I have already evaluated the case in the 701 Club. I also left out cases which were labeled "for information only" or had no date.

With that being said, the following pages describe my evaluation of the Blue Book case files for January-June 1953.

January 1953

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Oldtown, ME	Insufficient data	Possible star (Vega)
1	Joshua Tree, CA	Other (unreliable report)	Agreed
1	Brookley AFB, Alabama	A/C	Possible meteor
1	Craig, MT	UNIDENTIFIED	Possible meteor
3	Adak, Alaska	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
4	Haifa, Jerusalem	Insufficient data	Agreed
4	Eau Gaille, FL	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
6	Dallas TX	Astro (venus)	Possibly Arcturus
6	Dallas, TX-Oklahoma	A/C	Possibly Arcturus/False returns
6	Ft Monmouth, NJ	Insufficient Data	Agreed
6	Warner AFB, GA	A/C	Agreed
8	Larson AFB, Washington	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
9	Misawa AB, Japan	Balloon	Agreed
9	San Antonio, TX	A/C	Agreed
10	Sonoma, CA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
10	Hopkins, MN	Insufficient data	Venus setting
10	Santa Ana, CA	A/C	Agreed
11	Gadsden, AL	Balloon	Moby Dick balloon Launched 1/8 CA
12	San Antonio, TX	Balloon	Agreed
13	Ft Monmouth, NJ	A/C	Meteor
14	Austin, TX	Balloon	Agreed
15	Westhampton Beach, NY	Astro (Star/planet)	Agreed. Venus and Mars
15	Marysville, TN	Balloon	Venus and Mars
16	Honolulu, T. H.	A/C	Agreed
17	Guatemala	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
19	Aquadulce, Panama	Other (Hoax)	Agreed
19	Freemont, TX	Insufficient data	Agreed
21	Hiram, GA	Insufficient data	Agreed
21	Eau Galle, FL	Insufficient data	Agreed

22	Patrick AFB, FL	Insufficient Data	Agreed
22	Harmon AFB, Newfoundland	Astro (Venus)	Probably Venus
22	Patrick AFB, FL	Insufficient Data	Agreed
23	Honshu, Japan	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
23	Austin, TX	Weather effects on radar	Agreed
23	Eklutna, Alaska	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
24	Suwon, Korea	A/C	Agreed
25	Pinewood, SC	A/C	Possibly Venus
26	Sampson AB, NY	A/C	A/C or possible meteor
26	Baronette, WI	Astro (star/planet)	Agreed. Probably Sirius
26	Continental Divide, NM	Astro (Venus)/ radar WX	Condon- leaking balloon. Not Venus (set at beginning of obs). Possible Moby dick balloon launched from Edwards AFB heading east on 1/26.
26	Alaska	Insufficient data	Agreed (possibly Vega low in north)
27	March AFB CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
27	Mather AFB CA	Balloon	Possible birds
27	Cottonwood, Az	A/C	Agreed
27	Tuscon, AZ	Astro (Meteor)	Possible A/C
27	Davenport, IA	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
28	Stuttgart, Germany	Astro (Star/planet)	Stuttgart sighting was probably Venus and Deneb. Other sighting at Frankfurt found in the file was not Venus or Deneb. That sighting should be UNIDENTIFIED.
28	Point Mugu, CA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
28	St Georges, Delaware	Other (unreliable report)	Insufficient information. Possibly Venus
28	Patrick AFB, FL	Insufficient data	Agreed
28	Corona, CA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
28	Albany, GA	Astro (Venus)/Radar UNIDENTIFIED	Radar UNIDENTIFIED (radar due west visual to NW possibly Deneb ground sighting towards Venus)
28	Grand Island/North Platte, Nebraska	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
28	Mitchell AFB, NY	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
28	Dahlgren, VA, Phil. Pa	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
29	Patrick AFB, FL	Other (cloud)	Agreed
29	Houlton, ME	Astro (Venus)	UNIDENTIFIED
29	Malibu Beach, CA	A/C	Agreed
29	Conway, SC	A/C (Navy Blimp)	Agreed
31	Bataan, Philippines	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
31	Albuquerque, NM	Insufficient data	Photo not received agreed
31	Lexington, KY	Astro (Meteor)	Possible meteor

February 1953

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
	Syracuse, NY	Other (conflicting data)	Agreed. Witness confused two different sightings and could not remember dates. Could also be insufficient information with lack of dates.
	Finland AFS, MN	Radar interference	Agreed

1	Quarryville, PA	Astro (Mars/Venus)	Agreed
1	Saratoga Springs, NY	Astro (Jupiter)	Agreed
1	Terra Haute, IN	A/C and Astro (Jupiter)	Possible A/C (not Jupiter)
2	Victorville, CA	Balloon	Agreed
3	Indonesia	Insufficient data	Agreed
3	Iceland	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
3	Dietrich, ID	Balloon	Agreed. Probably Moby Dick balloon FLT B-14
3	Pepperell, New Foundland	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
3	Ramsey, NJ	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
4	Yuma, AZ	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
4	Blythe, CA	Balloon	Agreed. Probably Moby Dick balloon FLT C-10
4	Lancaster, PA	Insufficient data	Probably Venus setting.
4	Maxwell AFB, AL	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
6	Truk Atoll	Aircraft	Agreed
6	Rosalia, WA	Balloon	Agreed
6	King Salmon, AK	Astro (Star/Planet)	Agreed (Probably Venus - Set at 0754Z)
7	Okinawa	Venus and false radar targets	Agreed
7	Hokkaido, Japan	Regulus and Weather targets	Probably Arcturus.
7	Corbin, KY	Insufficient data	Possibly Venus setting at 0300Z
8	Barter Island, AK	Balloon	Agreed. Possible Balloon.
8	Dobbins AFB, GA	Astro (stars/planets)	Agreed (Probably Jupiter)
9	Dobbins AFB, GA	Astro (Jupiter)	Agreed
10	Misawa AB, Japan	Insufficient data	Agreed
10	Richmond, VA	Other (search-lights)	UNIDENTIFIED
10	Laurel, MT	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
11	Olean, NY	Insufficient data	Agreed
11	Hamptonville, NC	Insufficient data	Agreed
11	Tunis, Libya	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
11	Patrick AFB, FL	Insufficient data	Agreed
11	Great Falls AFB, MT	A/C	Agreed.
12	Misawa AB, Japan	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
12	Lake Charles, LA	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
12	Vichy, MO	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
13	Carswell AFB, TX	A/C and Ground targets	Agreed
13	Petersburg, VA	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
13	San Francisco, CA	Other (Inversion effects)	Agreed
15	Corry, PA	Insufficient data	Possibly Jupiter or Venus
16	Ramier, AL	Balloon	Agreed (possible balloon)
16	Willow, AK	Astro (Vega)	Possibly Vega followed by Jupiter
17	Port Austin, MI	Venus and UN-IDENTIFIED radar	Agreed

17	Elmendorf AFB, AK	Balloon	Agreed (track consistent with winds measured by Anchorage radiosonde at 0300 and 1500Z)
18	Greensboro, NC	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
18	Iceland	Insufficient data	Agreed
20	Cho-Do, Korea	Astro (Venus)	Agreed (Possible)
20	Pittsburgh and Stockton, CA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
20	Russia	Balloon	Insufficient data
20	Sturgeon Bay, WI	Astro (Star/planet)	Insufficient data with potential for unreliable report. Snow storm had just hit region. Weather was possibly clear late in evening but impossible to tell. Witness completed report one month after event.
21	Green Bay, WI	Astro (Arcturus)	Agreed
22	Buffalo, NY	Insufficient data	Could not locate File
22	Arlington, TX	Insufficient data	Could not locate File
22	Dover, DE	Astro (Venus/Jupiter)	Agreed (Venus)
22	Dodson, MT	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
22	Olean, NY	Astro (Arcturus)	Agreed
23	Celebes	Insufficient data	Agreed
23	Queens, NY	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
23	Fortville, IN	Balloon	Agreed
23	Maine	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
23	Southern Wisconsin	Insufficient data	Agreed. Observed from moving car. No specific location or route. Possible Jupiter sighting from moving car resulting in object appearing to move in northerly direction.
23	Olean, NY	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
24	Dayton, OH	Astro (Venus)	Moonset
24	Montpelier, ID	A/C	Could not locate File
24	Sherman, TX	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
24	Olean, NY	Insufficient data	Probably Capella
24	Olean, NY	Insufficient data	Possibly Moon
24-6	Great Falls, MT	Insufficient data	Agreed
25	Borneo	Insufficient data	Agreed
25	Charleston, WV	Electronic counter-measures	Agreed
25	Olean, NY	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
25-7	Japan	Lighthouse, Arcturus, Venus	Agreed
26	Greenland	Inversion (WX)	Agreed
26	Kingsville, MD	A/C	Agreed (possible A/C)
26	Pepperell AB, Newfoundland	Other (Flare)	Meteor
26	Klamath Falls, Oregon	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
26-7	San Antonio, TX	Balloon and A/C	Agreed
26-8	Dover, De	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
27	Great Falls AB, MT	Insufficient data	Agreed
27	Shreveport, LA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27	Pasadena, CA	Astro (Star/Planet)	Agreed. Probably Sirius
27	Dayton, OH	Insufficient data	Agreed

28	Colorado Springs, Co	Balloon	Agreed. Probably Moby Dick flight B35
28	Richmond, VA	Other (Contrail)	Agreed

March 1953

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Olean, NY	Insufficient data	Agreed. Object reported as going fast to south but was seen for 29 minutes. Possible Antares observation and object was meant to be described as "spinning fast". Same observer making multiple UFO reports from Olean in February and March.
1	Misawa and Hokaido, Japan	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
1	Princeton, NJ	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
1	Olean, NY	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
1	Dover AFB, DE	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
2	Cambria, CA	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
3	Luke AFB, AZ	Other (Contrails)	Agreed
4	Syracuse, NY	Insufficient data	Possibly Venus
5	Shaw AFB, SC	Balloon	Description of visual indicates it might have been a research balloon. Moby Dick balloon launched on C34 on March 3 from California not accounted for. Several Moby Dick Balloons reaching east coast during this time period.
5	Baltimore, MD	Astro (star/planet)	Agreed. Probably Venus
5	Leeds Center, ME	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File. Hynek letter identified as Venus
5	Erie, PA	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File. Hynek letter identified as possible A/C
6	Seria, Hesselton, North Borneo	Balloon	Could not locate File.
6	Tokyo, Japan	Insufficient data	Could not locate File.
6	Green, ME	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File.
7	Kent's Hill, ME	Astro (Venus)	Not Venus (set at 918EST Observation 2202 EST) Jupiter 9 degrees elevation. Probably Jupiter.
7	Hamilton, MT	A/C	Could not locate File. Hynek letter identified as possible A/C
8	Ashiya AB, Kyushu, Japan	Vis: Astro (Venus) Radar: AP	Could not locate File. NICAP has copies that Dr. MacDonald had provided. Based on this information, I agree that Venus is the explanation. The radar information could have been anomalous propagation based on the description of the targets.
8	Warwick, MA	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File.
9	Karachi, Pakistan	Astro (Meteor)	Could not locate File.
9	Hamilton, MT	Astro (Meteor)	Could not locate File.
9	Miamisburg, and West Carrollton, OH	Balloon	Possible Moby Dick balloon FLT A33. CASE NOT ON FILE. Balloon ended up in Tennessee to the south on this date.
9	Kent's Hill, ME	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File.
10	Leed's Center, ME	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File. Hynek letter identified as Venus
10	Great Falls, MT	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File.

10-11	Hackettstown, NJ	Astro (Venus) Astro (Star/Planet) UNIDENTIFIED	Venus appears to be first sighting. Second sighting could have been Jupiter but it set one hour prior to the time listed by witness. Betelgeuse, Aldebaran and Sirius all low in west at time of second sighting. Third sighting appears to be Regulus. Witness had been watching out her window and observed objects setting over the hill to the west.
11	Waterton, NY	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File.
12	Lancaster, NY	A/C	Could not locate File.
12	Garden, AL	Insufficient data	Could not locate File.
13	Greenville, MS	Balloon (Moby Dick)	Holloman AFB launch 133
13	Bartlettville, OK	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File. Hynek letter identified as Venus
14	Sea of Japan	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
14	Anchorage, AK	Astro (Venus)	Could not locate File.
15	Erding AFB, Germany	Astro (Sirius)	Could not locate File. Hynek letter suggests this was Sirius
15	Le Moye, AL	Other (Birds)	Could not locate File.
17	Gambill, St. Lawrence Islands	A/C	Could not locate File.
17	Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela	Other (Flaw in film)	Agreed
17	Great Falls, MT	Insufficient data	Could not locate File. Hynek letter identified as possibly a balloon
18	Williams AFB, AZ	Balloon	Could not locate File. Hynek Letter suggested mirage.
19	Tonawanda, NY	Insufficient data	Could not locate File. Hynek letter states it is insufficient data
19	Harmon AFB, Newfoundland	Balloon	Agreed
19	Crystal Lake, OH	A/C	Agreed
19	Cape Vincent, NY	Astro (Venus)	Agreed (weather indicated overcast but witnesses reported seeing the object intermittently over four hours indicating it was peaking through holes in the clouds)
19	Redlion, OH	Other (Bazooka Shell)	Agreed
20	Old Baldy and Pork Chop Hill, Korea	Insufficient data	Agreed. This was only an AP news report. No formal report provided to BB regarding UFOs on radar.
20	Anchorage, AK	Astro (Jupiter)	Agreed (Possibly Venus as well)
21	Elmira, NY	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
23	Casper, WY	Balloon	Agreed
23	Casper, WY	A/C	Agreed
23	Pasadena, TX	Balloon	Agreed
23	Bay City, MI	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
24	Kent, England	Insufficient data	Agreed
24-6	Gambill, St. Lawrence, AK	Astro (Venus)	Agreed (possible report missing time of obs)
25	Panama City, FL	A/C	Agreed
25	Rabat, French Morocco	A/C and Ground light	Agreed
25	San Antonio, TX	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27	Sheaves Cove, Newfoundland	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
27	Canal Zone, Panama	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
27	Mt. Taylor, NM	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
28	Mascoutah, IL	Other (Mirage)	Hynek declared this a mirage. No evidence presented for conditions of a mirage. Possible unreliable report.
29	Spooner, WI	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED

29	Cochransville, PA	Balloon	Agreed
30	Lyle, WA	Balloon (Moby Dick)	Agreed FLT A50
31	Honshu, Japan	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
31	Williams AFB, AZ	Balloon	Agreed
31	Conrad, MT	Astro (Venus)	Astro Jupiter or Sirius (Jupiter set at 0525Z WNW, Sirius 0615Z WSW). Sighting at 0555Z. Hynek suggested Venus with time being incorrect.

April 1953

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
3	Korea	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
4	Webster Village, MD	Insufficient data	Agreed
5	Detroit Lakes, MN	Insufficient data	Possible bird
8	Fukuoka, Japan	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
8	San Juan, Puerto Rico	Balloon	Agreed
8	Sonderstrum AB, Greenland	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
12	Torbay airport, Newfoundland	A/C	Agreed
12	Sweetwater, Nevada	A/C	Possible birds
14	Sheave's cove, Newfoundland	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
14-23	Manchuria	Balloon	Agreed
15	Tuscon, AZ	1, 2, and 4 UNIDENTIFIED 3. A/C	All UNIDENTIFIED
16	East Prairie, MO	A/C	Agreed
19	Ft. Davis, TX	A/C	Agreed
19	Grand Valley, CO	Other (Unreliable report)	Insufficient data (lack of important information direction/elevation)
19	Lake Superior (Calcumet, MI)	Other (inversion effect)	Electromagnetic interference
20	Sheave's cove, Newfoundland	A/C	Agreed
20	Brooklyn, NY	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
23	Addison, NY	Other (reflection)	Agreed
28	Columbus, MS	Insufficient data	Agreed
28	Klamath Falls, OR	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
28	Fontana, CA	Other (mirage)	Possible lights in Santa Ana Mountains.
29	Syracuse, NY	Insufficient data	Agreed
29	Hawaiian islands	A/C	Agreed

May 1953

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Goose AFB, Labrador	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
2	130 mi SW of Goose AFB, Labrador	Insufficient data	Agreed (Specifics of aircraft are missing - no heading/course listed)
3	Harmon AFB, Newfoundland	Other (bird)	Agreed
7	San Antonio, TX	A/C	Balloon
11	Teheran, Iran	A/C	Agreed
11	Seattle, Renton, WA	Balloon	Moby Dick Flt T76
12	Dayton, OH	Balloon	Possible Balloon
12	Pacific Northwest	Other (Inversion effects)	Agreed

13	Helsinki, Finland Stockholm, Sweden	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
15	Ojibwa, WI	Other (Conflicting data)	Data insufficient as well
16	Inyokern, CA	Balloon	Flt E83 launched at 1610 PST. However, sighting was of 3 objects. Probably balloons based on description but not Moby Dick.
17	East St. Louis, IL	Insufficient data	Possible A/C
18	Abadan, Iran	Astro (Meteor)	Insufficient information.
19	Miami, FL	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed (based on Hynek's letter describing the incident)
19	Ellington AFB, TX	A/C	Possible A/C
20	Brush Creek, CA	Other (Hoax)	Agreed
20	Los Angeles, CA	Other (Hallucination)	Agreed
21	Kansas City, MO	A/C	Agreed
23	Lackland AFB, TX	A/C	Agreed
25	Ramore, Ontario	Astro (Star/Planet)	Agreed. Probably Venus
25	Marshall AFB, KS	Insufficient data	Agreed
27	San Antonio, TX	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
28	Dayton, OH	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
30	Flourissant, MO	Balloon	Agreed
31	Darlington, WI	Astro (Venus)	Agreed

June 1953

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
2	Newton, MS Lake Charles, LA	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
2	San Antonio, TX	Other (Searchlight)	Agreed
4	Muster, TX	A/C	Agreed
5	Guam	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
7	Norwood, OH	Balloon	Agreed
8	Bethesda, MD	Balloon	Possible FLT E95 launched 6/4 from Edwards.
9	North Korea	Balloon	Agreed
9	Tilamook, OR	Astro (Venus)	Agreed
10	Detroit, MI	A/C	Agreed
11	Goose AFB, Labrador	Other (Birds)	Agreed
12	Covington, GA	Insufficient data	Agreed
13	Pacific	A/C	Possible meteor
16	San Antonio, TX	Other (Reflection)	Agreed
18	Iwo Jima	Other (Anomalous Propagation)	Agreed
18	Key West, FL	Other (searchlight)	Conflicting data. Possible fireball.
20	Shawnee, KS	Insufficient data	Possible illusion due to sunlight or reflection of aircraft by setting sun.
21	Naha and Kadena, Okinawa	1. A/C 2. UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
21	Pepperell, Newfoundland	Balloon	Possible daylight sighting of Venus (insufficient data)
22	Goose AFB, Labrador	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
23	Bracketsville, TX	Astro (meteor)	Agreed
24	Hampton Bays, NY	Other (Psychological)	Agreed

24	Annapolis, MD Washington DC	Balloon	Agreed
24	Iwo Jima	1. Other (Ground lights) 2. UNIDENTIFIED	1. Agreed 2. UNIDENTIFIED
24	Simutak, Greenland	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
24	Cincinnati, OH	Astro (Meteor)	Agreed
24	New London, CT	A/C (Crash in air)	Agreed
28	White Plains, NY	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
30	Ramore, Ontario	Astro (Moon)	Agreed
30	Sacramento, CA	Astro (Regulus)	Agreed

Reclassification

Out of the 288 cases in the Blue Book files from January through June of 1953, I could not locate 27 of the files. This leaves a total of 261, that I evaluated. In my opinion, 47 of these were improperly classified (about 18%). This table describes these cases and how I felt they should have been reclassified. However, if I felt a case had no possible solution, I entered it as UNIDENTIFIED in this table.

Date	Location	Reclassification	Reason
Jan 1	Oldtown, Me	Possibly Vega	Listed as insufficient data, I felt the observation sounded like a star scintillating. The object was described as being visible in NE sky at 0315EST. Vega rose at 0235EST at Azimuth 32 degrees. Any motion appears to be due to the auto-kinetic effect. No report on what happened to object.
1	Brookley AFB, Al	Possible Meteor	Listed as aircraft. Duration of 30 seconds is a bit long but not unheard of for fireballs. It is an estimate and should be treated as such. The report that the object simply disappeared in flight is indicative of a meteor and not an aircraft.
1	Craig, Mt	Possible Meteor	see SUNlite 7-1.
6	Dallas, Tx	Possibly Arcturus	Listed as Venus but Venus not visible this late at night. However, position appears to agree with Arcturus rising in the ENE at 0045 CST. Observations of the objects shape were made through small telescopes and binoculars, which, if used improperly, can result in odd shapes and distortion. Some referred to it as star-like. Most observations lasted for a long period of time indicating an astronomical object. Color variations reported, which are consistent with scintillation effects.
6	Dallas, Tx, OKC	Possibly Arcturus. Radar data insufficient. Possibly false target due to temperature inversion.	Continuation of Dallas Texas report. Report of object to the NE that moved through 90 degrees of arc towards to SE in 3 minutes. This appears in conflict with the tower report that states it went 25 degrees in 20 minutes moving south and up. Listed as A/C. Only A/C in vicinity was DC-3, which was 30miles NE of Love Field. They reported seeing nothing. Radar from OKC reported one target traveling 600mph in vicinity of Dallas. No other specific data. Other radars in vicinity reported no contacts. OKC and Fort Worth radiosonde data indicated temperature inversions present.
10	Hopkins, Mn	Venus setting	Listed as insufficient data but observations are consistent with Venus setting.
13	Fort Monmouth, NJ	Meteor	Listed as A/C. Observations could be A/C but appear to be more consistent with a bright meteor.
15	Marysville, Tn	Venus and Mars	Listed as balloon because witness stated it was balloon shaped with Yellow light on bottom and red light on top slowly descending in west for 30-40 min. Mars only a half degree above Venus setting in west 45 minutes after initial observation.

25	Pinewood, SC	Possibly Venus	Listed as A/C. Direction of observation, based on description, was towards the West. Object always moving to or from west. Venus setting in west at time of observation.
26	Continental Divide, NM	Possible Balloon	Listed as Venus and weather returns. Venus had set about time of initial observation and can't explain visual sighting. Winds at 0900Z Holloman AFB from WSW. Radar target moving towards the north. Condon made arguments for this being a leaky weather balloon. While this seems to be a low probability, Dr. Thayer thought otherwise. I list this as a "possible balloon" based on his arguments.
27	Mather AFB, Ca	Possible birds	Listed as possible balloon. Behavior similar to soaring birds riding thermals and reflecting sunlight.
27	Tuscon, Az	Possible A/C	Listed as meteor. Appears to be more likely an A/C of some kind.
28	Stuttgart, Ge	Venus and Deneb. Frankfurt sighting is UNIDENTIFIED.	Stuttgart sighting was probably Venus and Deneb. Other sighting at Frankfurt found in file was not Venus or Deneb. That sighting should be UNIDENTIFIED.
28	St. Georges, De	Insufficient information, Possibly Venus	BB listed this as an unreliable report. Object seen by group of saucer enthusiasts in a car. Observations came second hand through telephone call. Insufficient information. Some indications it might have been Venus.
28	Albany, Ga	Possibly Venus and Deneb for visual. Radar UNIDENTIFIED	Pilots sighting towards NW. Ground observation was towards west. Venus setting in west. Deneb setting in NW. RADAR still UNIDENTIFIED
29	Houlton, Me	UNIDENTIFIED	Listed as daylight sighting of Venus. While Venus was possible, the description does not match Venus.
Feb 1	Terra Haute, IN	Possibly A/C	BB focused on Jupiter as potential explanation but the lights were ahead of the pilot and too low for Jupiter (elevation 30 degrees). More than likely, the lights were the multiple aircraft that BB determined to be in the area ahead of the aircraft in the vicinity of St. Louis.
4	Lancaster, PA	Probably Venus setting.	BB gave this an insufficient information designation but thought it might be Mars because it was reported as red. Venus was close to Mars. Mars was much fainter than the bright Venus, which was probably reddish in color due to it being close to the horizon.
7	Hokkaido, Japan	Probably Arcturus	Azimuth listed as 91 degrees and elevation listed as 15 degrees. Regulus identified as source but it was at elevation of 50 degrees and azimuth of 133 degrees. Arcturus was at azimuth 75 and elevation 13 degrees. Witness also stated object 30-40 degrees from Big Dipper. Arcturus is 30 degrees from handle of Big Dipper.
7	Corbin, KY	Possibly Venus setting at 0300Z	Originally reported as "going south" but then "heading west", where it disappeared about 0305Z.
10	Richmond, VA	UNIDENTIFIED	BB classified this as searchlights but gave no evidence that searchlights were operating in the area. No satisfactory explanation.
10	Corry, PA	Possibly Jupiter or Venus	Object was listed as to the Southwest of observer. Venus was to the West and Jupiter was WSW. No angle of elevation given and object disappeared into a cloud. Either object could have been the source.
16	Willow, AK	Possibly Vega followed by Jupiter	BB declared this as Vega, which might explain the initial sighting. When the plane decided to break its landing approach and fly NW, They reported the object to the NW and then West before fading out. Jupiter was setting in the WNW.
20	Russia	Insufficient information	Report is one paragraph with no specific location or time in a country, where even getting a confirmation they even launched balloons at any time would be next to impossible. The balloon explanation is not proper and this should be insufficient information.

20	Sturgeon Bay, WI	Insufficient information	BB classified this as an astronomical object. However, the witness reported their sighting over a month after the event and could not remember if it was clear or cloudy. A snow storm had passed through the area on the date in question. Could have been a distant ground light.
24	Dayton, OH	Moonset	BB listed this as Venus without looking at the time. It was 4:30 AM and Venus was an evening object. Moonset was 30 minutes after sighting. Object described as oblong. Moon was Gibbous phase. Witness thought initially thought it was the moon and then decided it was not.
24	Olean, NY	Possibly Capella	Object flashing colors of red and green in northwest, heading north. Capella was in the northwest and its motion was taking it further north as it got closer to the horizon.
24	Olean, NY	Possibly Moon	Silver disc shaped object visible to west of observer. Moon setting in WNW.
Mar 7	Kent's Hill, ME	Probably Jupiter	BB listed this as Venus but Venus had set at the time of observation. Probably Jupiter which was setting in the same location a few hours later.
10 -11	Hackettstown, NJ	Astro (Venus) Astro (Star/Planet) UNIDENTIFIED	Venus appears to be first sighting. Second sighting could have been Jupiter but it set one hour prior to the time listed by witness. Betelgeuse, Aldebaran and Sirius all low in west at time of second sighting. Third sighting appears to be Regulus. Witness had been watching out her window and observed objects setting over the hill to the west.
28	Mascoutah, IL	Possibly Unreliable report	Hynek declared this a mirage. No evidence presented for conditions of a mirage. Possible unreliable report due to witness background.
31	Conrad, MT	Probably Jupiter or Sirius	Astro Jupiter or Sirius (Jupiter set at 0525Z WNW, Sirius 0615Z WSW). Sighting at 0555Z. Hynek suggested Venus with time being incorrect.
Apr 5	Detroit Lakes, MN	Possible bird	Listed as insufficient data. Star-like object rapidly moving in circles, which then vanished.
12	Sweetwater, NV	Possible birds	Listed as squadron of aircraft. There was no evidence for a group of aircraft in the vicinity. A group of birds flying together might explain the sequence of events.
15	Tuscon, AZ	UNIDENTIFIED	One of the sightings was listed as a possible A/C. I do not believe this evaluation is correct
28	Fontana, CA	Possible lights in Santa Ana mountains	Listed as mirage. Plane was flying into the Los Angeles area and saw lights in front of his aircraft. He never closed with the lights and then turned towards Long Beach. The lights then were towards the rear of his aircraft. This all points towards the lights being over or on the mountain range.
May 7	San Antonio, TX	Possible Balloon	Blue Book listed this as an aircraft. Kelly AFB was to southwest of observer. Winds were from south below 2km and west between 2-3 km. A balloon launched from Kelly AFB would have flown in the general direction of the witness who reported the direction of travel being from SW to NE.
12	Dayton, OH	Possible Balloon	Blue Book listed this as a confirmed balloon. The report is very limited but the probable source of a weather balloon was downwind from the location of observation. There were no known sources for this balloon even though the characteristics were that of a balloon.
15	Ojibwa, WI	Insufficient data	Blue Book stated this was conflicting data. Much of the data for sighting was missing as well. There were no directions/course of objects. There was also no direction of travel for car. This makes it insufficient information.

17	East St. Louis, IL	Possible A/C	Listed as insufficient data. Observers ages 12-14. The only thing that rules out an aircraft was the description of the shape. There was a suggestion by somebody at ATIC it was a possible jet seen in twilight. This is probably the source of the sighting.
18	Abadan, Iran	Insufficient data	The report surrounds some local Iranian newspapers reporting that a large group of people saw a moon sized object moving from NW to NE for twenty minutes. However, the report really lacks details. Blue Book listed this as a possible meteor and assumed that the 20 minutes was actually 20 seconds. The fact that no formal report was filed indicates that the duration, date, and time can be questioned, which indicates to me, insufficient data. The reported direction of observation was towards the Soviet Union, which indicates it could have been a possible rocket test from Kapustan Yar. However, there is no record of a launch for the date in question. It is also possible it might have been a high altitude research balloon. While Moby Dick balloons were designed to never make it this far, a large number were never recovered and a possible malfunction could have allowed a balloon to stay aloft longer than planned.
Jun 13	Pacific	Possible meteor	Data very limited. One message describing what appeared to be an afterburner that shut off abruptly. Location was far from land and is unlikely that a jet fighter could have been out to sea that far. Sighting sounds like a meteor.
18	Key West, FL	Conflicting data	Witnesses never mentioned seeing moon indicating details may have been exaggerations or inaccurate. During interview with witness, interviewer noted some eccentricities in the primary witness. Possible fireball.
20	Shawnee, KS	Possible reflection	Listed as insufficient information but there appears to have been enough data to draw a conclusion. Witness reported seeing bright spheres traveling across sky for ten seconds. Time was late evening and aircraft or balloons would reflect the sun if seen at the correct angle.
21	Naha and Kadena, Okinawa	UNIDENTIFIED	Blue book listed part of this sighting as an aircraft. There appears to be no supporting evidence for that conclusion. All parts of this sighting should be listed as UNIDENTIFIED
21	Pepperell, Newfoundland	Insufficient data	Listed as a balloon. While there is a good amount of information, there are no directions and elevation angles. It could have been a daylight sighting of Venus but there is not enough evidence for that conclusion.
28	White Plains, NY	Possible Balloon	Listed as insufficient data because report was received three months later and was only one message. The direction of travel was in the general direction of the winds indicating possible balloon.

Summary

The 18% value of improper classification is a bit disconcerting but this does not mean they are observations of something extraordinary. In most cases, they were just classified too hastily/improperly. I don't consider this "failure rate" too excessive. Like all endeavors of this nature, a human factor enters into the evaluation process and that introduces errors. Personal bias, missed clues, or a lack of resources are all factors that can affect the investigation. Out of the cases that I could not identify, there were some that were perplexing to the point I could not offer a solution. I could easily have placed many of these in the "insufficient information" category but that really would have been a "cop-out". They met the requirements to be listed as UNIDENTIFIED and that is how they were labeled. If information surfaces that presents a possible solution, I will correct the listing in the next issue of SUNlite.

There was also several observations I made in my review of the case files. Dr. Hynek appeared to be heavily involved during this time period. There are several letters from him to Blue Book offering explanations and comments about individual cases. Hynek seemed to be encouraged by this interaction with the staff and requested they keep sending the files to him in the same manner. I also noticed that most of the record cards used the 1963 form, which means the old cards were redone in the 1960s. The reason is not as nefarious as some proponents might suggest. Blue Book was probably replacing lost, non-existent, damaged, or illegible cards.

Next issue, I will perform a check of the second half of 1953. It will be interesting to see if Blue Book's improper classification rate remains or improves with time.

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