

# SUNlite

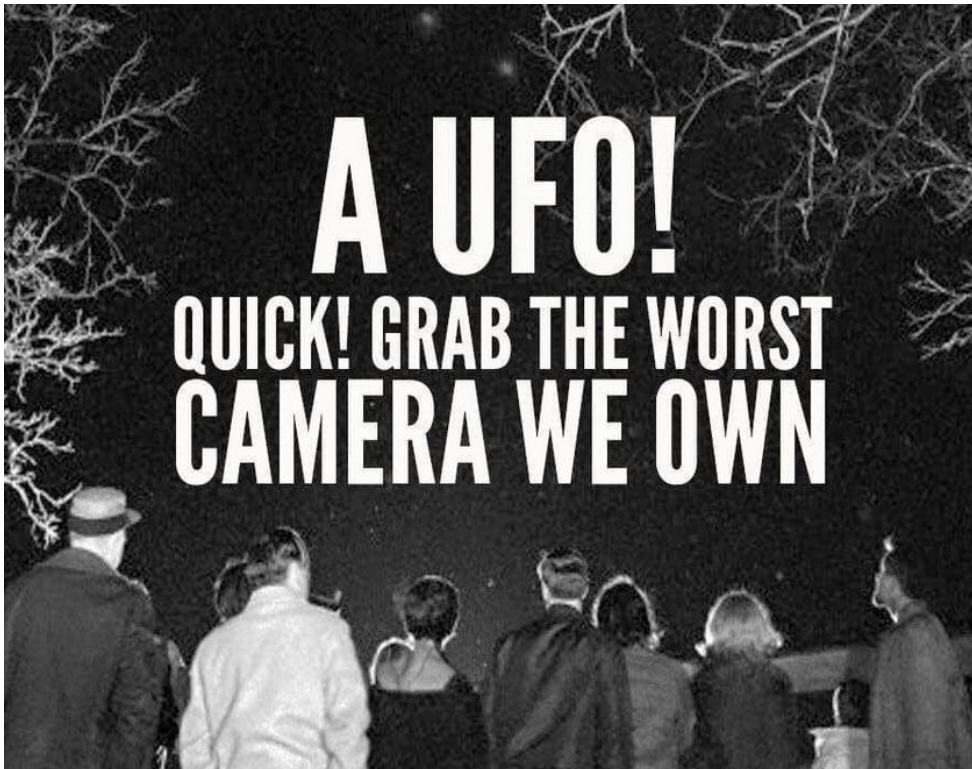
Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs



*I feel darn foolish about this whole thing...I'm convinced I took off and went chasing a star or some kind of celestial body.*

LT. Colonel Dale Shafer Jr. Air National Guard pilot March 8, 1950





Cover: This is a 300mm photograph of Venus in broad daylight. While I was able to see it with the unaided eye when I took the photograph, it was not an easy task to locate at mid-day. However, if one sees it in morning twilight, it is possible to easily follow it for several hours after sunrise. This is probably what happened on March 8, 1950. The quote on the cover comes from the pilot who chased that UFO that morning. His direction of travel was towards the planet Venus.

Left: This meme appeared in an astrophotography meme forum. I wrote an article long ago about UFO photographs (SUNlite 3-3 ) and it still applies today. The question remains: Where are all the GOOD UFO photographs that are not possible hoaxes?

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## 2021 - More of the same old stuff?

It seems that the new year has not brought any changes to the way some in UFOlogy promote themselves. One of the first efforts to present some UFOlogical news was authored by Anthony Bragalia. Skeptics and proponents probably remember him as the individual that brought us wild speculation about the origins of Nitinol (which differ from documented history), one-sided interpretations of stories from Roswell, and, of course, the over-the-top promotion of the Roswell slides before it was revealed that it was nothing more than the mummified body of a two-year old boy. Readers of SUNlite are also familiar with my rebuttals of his writings in the past and I will not repeat them here. [In early February, Anthony Bragalia posted a story based on some FOIA files he had received.](#) In that story, Bragalia proclaimed that he had evidence that US military had recovered debris from Roswell, and other UFO crashes, and it had been scientifically studied. [John Greenwald immediately responded and demonstrated Bragalia's conclusions were wrong.](#) Susan Gough, spokesperson for the Department of Defense, also refuted his interpretation. According to her, the only materials that were analyzed were of known sources and there was no "debris" every studied. Bragalia's defense seems to be that his supreme analytical skills allow him to be the only person that can properly interpret this information because it is so highly classified that it is only implied in the document. One has to wonder what the difference is between implication only one person can see and that the documents don't reveal anything of the sort. Only one can be correct and it is my opinion that Bragalia's case is so weak that very few people will accept it.

Speaking of wild claims based on suspect data, [Forbes had an article by Ethan Siegal that explains how science looks poorly on the "aliens" explanation.](#) It should be required reading for all UFO proponents so they can understand what is needed for them to make their case in the scientific arena. Maybe Bragalia should read it before posting his stories.

[Meanwhile, John Greenwald Jr. posted all of the CIA UFO files on his web site.](#) The media, as expected, seemed to think this was "news". However, all of the files have been available for years. That being said, I cheer Mr. Greenwald's efforts at making them freely available for all. Bravo-Zulu to the Black Vault, which has continued to demonstrate it is a valuable and reliable source of information. It is an island of sanity inside the sea of madness that is UFOlogy.

On the other side of the pond, Dr. David Clarke has some additions to his blog, [which includes a section on radar and UAPs.](#) Right now he is focused on Radar UAPs seen from the UK and it includes commentary about the Lakenheath-Bentwaters incident (1956), RAF Manston (1956-7), and East Anglia 1996. I am sure he will expand it with time.

Lastly, I want to post a "correction" from my last issue. [I had failed to notice that Kevin Randle had a blog entry on December 8 where he acknowledged that the Hawaiian video, that he had previously considered as "unidentified", was a re-entry.](#) I failed to see that post and should have included it in my commentary. My apologies to Mr. Randle in omitting this in my discussion of his initial blog entry about this sighting.

# WEEDING OUT THE WEINSTEIN CATALOGUE

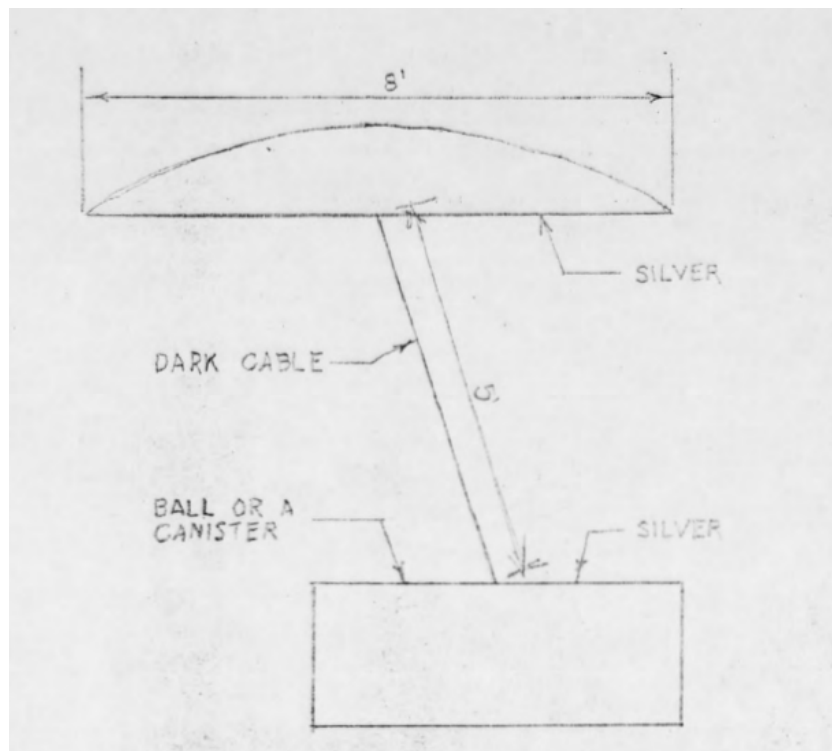
April 9, 1948 - Montgomery, Alabama

The source of this information is from the project Blue Book files. The table summarizes the event as, "one silver disc-shaped (sp) with a dark cable and a sphere underneath."

## The Project Sign File

Unlike many of the early Blue Book case files from this time period, this one is pretty complete. The basic sequence of events were<sup>2</sup>:

- Lt. Colonel Robert Hughes was flying a P-51H from Tyndall AFB in the Florida Panhandle.
- When he reached Montgomery, Alabama, Hughes lowered his altitude to 16000 feet (about 4900 meters) and began a 180 degree left turn.
- As he was completing his turn, he saw an object, described as a silver disc, off his left wing at the 10 O'Clock position.
- The pilot then banked to follow the object, which appeared to be moving in a northwest direction.
- Now that he could get a better look, he described it as an silver parachute-like object that was about 8-foot in diameter with a cable underneath, which was about five-feet long. Attached to that cable was a large cannister, or ball, which was silver in color.
- He lost sight of the object after about 5 seconds. His air speed was 310 mph and he was still banking. The time was 1510 hours CST (2110Z)
- The object disappeared horizontally and not vertically.
- Lt. Colonel Hughes returned to Tyndall AFB, where he was interviewed by two people and gave both the same story.
- Hughes made the following sketch of the object:



Project Sign determined this object to be a balloon and classified it as such. In Hynek's review of the case, he also classified it as probably a balloon based on the description.<sup>3</sup>

## Analysis

If this was a balloon, we have to determine what the winds were at the time. Unfortunately, Project Sign did not obtain any data and the RAOBS site does not have any data from Montgomery. The closest locations for winds data was from Apalachicola, Florida (200 miles away), Atlanta (150 miles away), Nashville (250 miles away), and New Orleans (280 miles away). The closest time for these balloons were 1500 and 1600Z and the values for close to 4900 meters were<sup>4</sup>:

Location	Wind direction (from)	Wind Speed (knots)
Atlanta (5060m)	290	40
Nashville (5030m)	310	39
New Orleans (5854m)	270	25

Note: Apalachicola did not have any winds data from their balloon. All they had were temperatures.

The impression from this data is that the winds were coming from the general direction of West-Northwest at around 30-40 knots.

The witness stated it was moving Northwest, which is against the wind if the above interpretation of the winds data is correct. However, he only saw the object for 5 seconds from an aircraft that was turning and flying at 310 mph. I don't think he could have made an accurate assessment of direction of movement or this motion could be due to his direction of flight.

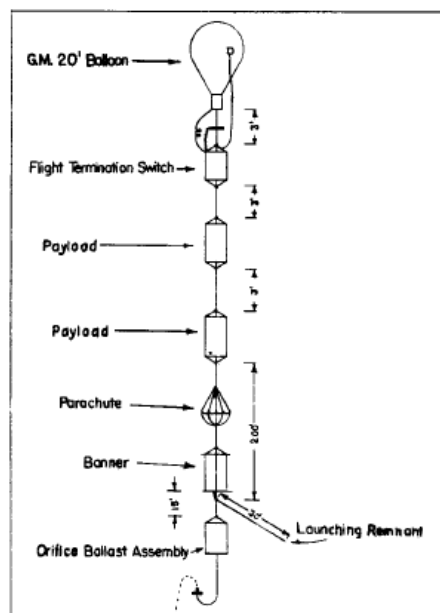
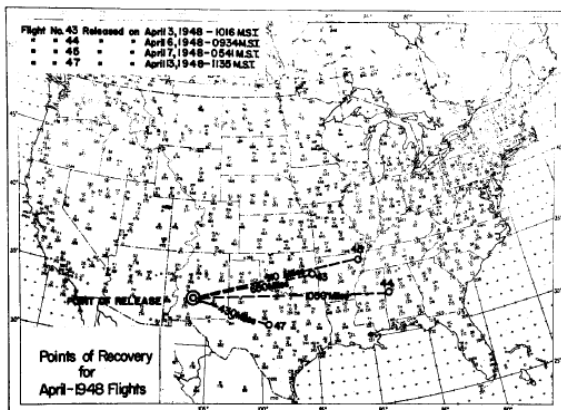
The pilot stated that it moved horizontally and away from him. Assuming Hughes flew along an azimuth of about 345 degrees from Tyndall AFB, his 180 degree turn would have put him on return azimuth of 165 degrees. Lt. Col. Hughes stated he first saw the object at 10 O'Clock (300 relative) near the end of his turn. Hughes also added that once he had completed his turn he got a better look at it, indicating he probably was closing the distance. This suggests the pilot thought it was moving in the opposite direction he was traveling as he came out of his turn. If this is true, it may have been traveling slow or was stationary and Hughes' rapid motion towards the south-southeast gave the apparent motion of traveling in the opposite direction. One can make the case he simply flew past it. There is no indication Hughes even circled around to see if he could regain the object's position. All it states is he returned to base once it was lost.

Blue Book classified this as a balloon and there is nothing in this report that rules out some sort of balloon. Even the sketch looks like a balloon with a payload. It could have been a simple weather balloon launched from nearby Maxwell AFB but there are other potential sources.

Project Mogul reports releasing nine balloons in April 1948 from Alamogordo, New Mexico.<sup>5</sup> They were not tracked by aircraft (only being tracked by radio direction finders in New Mexico) but four of these were recovered in early April and all of them went eastward. Flight #44 (launched on April 6) was recovered only about 100-150 miles from Montgomery. Missing from these early April

flights is flight #46, which, apparently, was not recovered. It would have been launched between April 7 and 13. It is possible that flight #46 could have been launched early on April 9 and ended up over Montgomery. At this point in the program, the flights included a device to rip the balloon so its descent would be faster as it passed through the air lanes. This could have produced a rather unusual looking balloon with payload. It would also make it difficult to re-acquire once somebody flew past it at high speed.

Flight 43 through 51: In April, 1948 a number of flights were made using .001" polyethylene balloons and fixed-leak ballast controls. Only four of these flights were recovered. The landing points of these are shown in Figure 15.



Flight 16: Train, typical of those flown in April, 1948

Additionally, in May of

1948, the NYU was flying balloons out of Maxwell AFB in Montgomery.<sup>6</sup> It is possible they were flying test flights prior to this in April.

All of this is mostly speculation about what the source of the balloon might have been. The bottom line continues to be that it resembled and acted like a balloon with a payload.

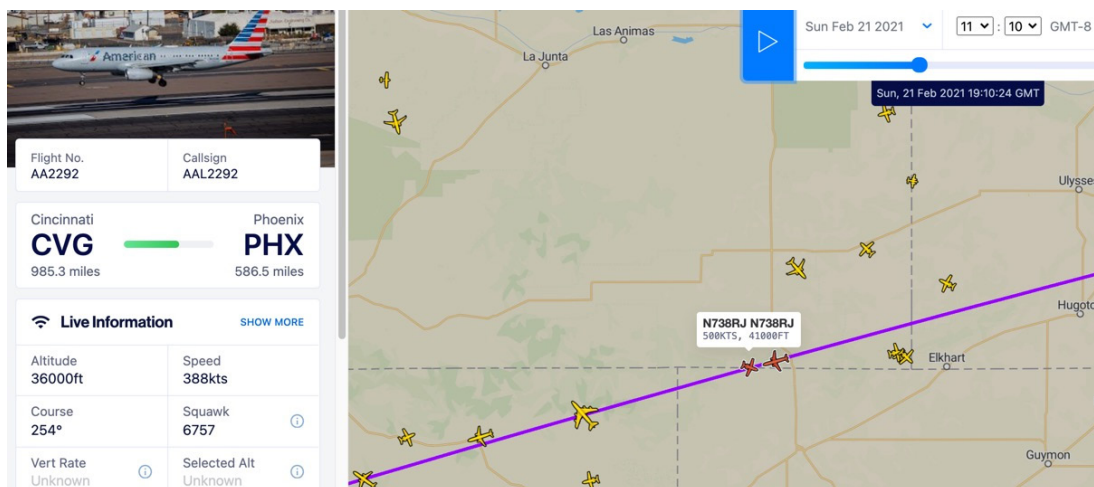
## Conclusion

In my opinion, I think Blue Book got this one correct. There seemed to be no reason to reject the balloon explanation. This should be removed from the Weinstein catalogue.

## Notes and references

1. Weinstein, Dominique F. Unidentified Aerial Phenomena: Eighty years of pilot sightings. NARCAP. February 2001. P. 10
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3. Hynek, J. Allen and Harriet R. Summerson. Final Report: Project 364. Columbus, Ohio. April 30, 1949 Incident #113.
4. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA/ESRL Radiosonde Database. Available WWW: <https://ruc.noaa.gov/raobs/>
5. Smith, James R. Technical report 93.02 Constant level balloons Section 3: Summary of flights. College of Engineering New York University, New York, NY July 15, 1949 p. 22-3.
6. Murray, William D. Technical report 93.03 Constant level balloons: Final Report. College of Engineering New York University, New York, NY. March 1, 1951 p. 24.

## A near miss with an airliner?



On February 21, an American Airlines aircraft, flying over New Mexico, reported to air traffic control that a "long cylindrical object" had just flown over them and it looked like a cruise missile. The media would report that there was no other air traffic in the area and that it was an "unidentified". My initial impressions was that, due to the short duration of the observation, it may have been a daylight meteor. However, there were no such reports in the American Meteor Society database. Still, an aircraft at 36,000 feet might be high enough to see meteors under conditions that ground observers might not have been able to see. I really did not give it much more thought until I saw that the metabunk forum began to look at the case.

After a bit of back and forth, the group decided that the most likely explanation was a Lear jet flying at 41,000 feet and in a direction almost opposite of the airliner. The image above comes from the Metabunk discussion. The intersection of the two aircraft was about eight to nine minutes before the air crew reported the event. Listening to the audio, the aircrew did not appear overly alarmed and they were not making a frantic report as if it had just happened. It seems that they probably took the time to think about what they had seen before making an inquiry about air traffic in the area. As a result, it is not unreasonable for there to be a delay of several minutes in making their report. Mick West posted a short video that demonstrating how the two aircraft flew near each other.

In my opinion, West's video makes a good case that this was nothing more than a Lear jet. It should be now listed as "probable aircraft" and not be entered into any UFO database like the Weinstein catalogue.



## March 8, 1950 Dayton, Ohio

The NICAP document states:

*March 8, 1950--Dayton, Ohio. A round UFO seen by the crew of a TWA airliner, was tracked on radar, and chased by two F-51s. [VIII]<sup>1</sup>*

Section VIII includes a few paragraphs:

*In mid-morning, the CAA received a report from Capt. W. H. Kerr, Trans-World Airways pilot, that he and two other TWA pilots had a UFO in sight. A gleaming object was visible, hovering at high altitude. CAA also had 20 or more reports on the UFO from the Vandalia area. Wright-Patterson AFB, near Dayton, was notified, and sent up four interceptors. The UFO was also visible to control tower operators and personnel of Air Technical Intelligence Center on the base. Radar had an unidentified target in the same position.*

*Two F-51 pilots reported that they could see the UFO, which presented a distinct round shape and seemed huge and metallic. But clouds moved in, and the pilots were forced to turn back. The Master Sergeant who tracked it on radar stated: "The target was a good solid return. . . caused by a good solid target." Witnesses reported that the UFO finally climbed vertically out of sight at high speed.<sup>2</sup>*

There is also a comment in the table, which provides us with the source information:

*Two F-51 pilots saw "huge and metallic" UFO which ground radar detected. Object gave solid "blip", climbed vertically.[12]<sup>3</sup>*

Note twelve states the information comes from Ruppelt and the True magazine article of August 1950. Ruppelt writes the following about the case:

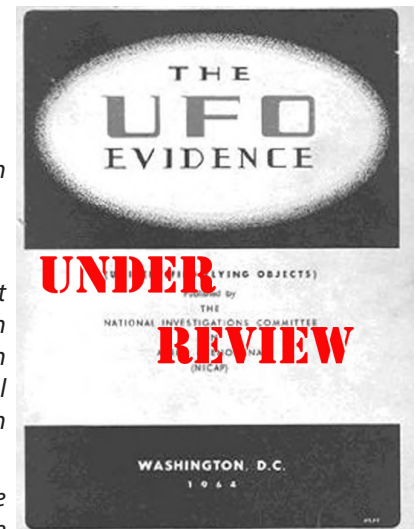
*About midmorning on this date a TWA airliner was coming in to land at the Dayton Municipal Airport. As the pilot circled to get into the traffic pattern, he and his copilot saw a bright light hovering off to the southeast. The pilot called the tower operators at the airport to tell them about the light, but before he could say anything, the tower operators told him they were looking at it too. They had called the operations office of the Ohio Air National Guard, which was located at the airport, and while the tower operators were talking, an Air Guard pilot was running toward an F-51, dragging his parachute, helmet, and oxygen mask.*

*I knew the pilot, and he later told me, "I wanted to find out once and for all what these screwy flying saucer reports were all about."*

*While the F-51 was warming up, the tower operators called ATIC and told them about the UFO and where to look to see it. The people at ATIC rushed out and there it was — an extremely bright light, much brighter and larger than a star. Whatever it was, it was high because every once in a while it would be blanked out by the thick, high, scattered clouds that were in the area. While the group of people were standing in front of ATIC watching the light, somebody ran in and called the radar lab at Wright Field to see if they had any radar "on the air." The people in the lab said that they didn't have, but they could get operational in a hurry. They said they would search southeast of the field with their radar and suggested that ATIC send some people over. By the time the ATIC people arrived at the radar lab the radar was on the air and had a target in the same position as the light that everyone was looking at. The radar was also picking up the Air Guard F-51 and an F-51 that had been scrambled from Wright-Patterson. The pilots of the Air Guard '51 and the Wright-Patterson '51 could both see the UFO, and they were going after it. The master sergeant who was operating the radar called the F-51's on the radio, got them together and started to vector them toward the target. As the two airplanes climbed they kept up a continual conversation with the radar operator to make sure they were all after the same thing. For several minutes they could clearly see the UFO, but when they reached about 15,000 feet, the clouds moved in and they lost it. The pilots made a quick decision; since radar showed that they were getting closer to the target, they decided to spread out to keep from colliding with one another and to go up through the clouds. They went on instruments and in a few seconds they were in the cloud. It was much worse than they'd expected; the cloud was thick, and the airplanes were icing up fast. An F-51 is far from being a good instrument ship, but they stayed in their climb until radar called and said that they were close to the target; in fact, almost on it. The pilots had another hurried radio conference and decided that since the weather was so bad they'd better come down. If a UFO, or something, was in the clouds, they'd hit it before they could see it. So they made a wise decision; they dropped the noses of their airplanes and dove back down into the clear. They circled awhile but the clouds didn't break. In a few minutes the master sergeant on the radar reported that the target was fading fast. The F-51's went in and landed.*

*When the target faded on the radar, some of the people went outside to visually look for the UFO, but it was obscured by clouds, and the clouds stayed for an hour. When it finally did clear for a few minutes, the UFO was gone.*

*A conference was held at ATIC that afternoon. It included Roy James, ATIC's electronics specialist and expert on radar UFO's. Roy had been over at the radar lab and had seen the UFO on the scope but neither the F-51 pilots nor the master sergeant who operated the radar were at the conference. The records show that at this meeting a unanimous decision was reached as to the identity of the UFO's. The bright light was Venus since Venus was in the southeast during midmorning on March 8, 1950, and the radar return was caused by the ice laden cloud that the F-51 pilots had encountered. Ice laden clouds can cause a radar return. The group of intelligence specialists at the meeting decided that this was further proved by the fact that as the F-51's approached the center of the cloud their radar return appeared to approach the UFO target on the radarscope. They were near the UFO and near ice, so the UFO must have been ice.*



*The case was closed.*

*I had read the report of this sighting but I hadn't paid too much attention to it because it had been "solved." But one day almost two years later I got a telephone call at my office at Project Blue Book. It was a master sergeant, the master sergeant who had been operating the radar at the lab. He'd just heard that the Air Force was again seriously investigating UFO's and he wanted to see what had been said about the Dayton Incident. He came over, read the report, and violently disagreed with what had been decided upon as the answer. He said that he'd been working with radar before World War II; he'd helped with the operational tests on the first microwave warning radars developed early in the war by a group headed by Dr. Luis Alvarez. He said that what he saw on that radarscope was no ice cloud; it was some type of aircraft. He'd seen every conceivable type of weather target on radar, he told me; thunderstorms, ice laden clouds, targets caused by temperature inversions, and the works. They all had similar characteristics — the target was "fuzzy" and varied in intensity. But in this case the target was a good, solid return and he was convinced that it was caused by a good, solid object.*

*And besides, he said, when the target began to fade on his scope he had raised the tilt of the antenna and the target came back, indicating that whatever it was, it was climbing. Ice laden clouds don't climb, he commented rather bitterly.*

*Nor did the pilot of one of the F-51's agree with the ATIC analysis. The pilot who had been leading the two ship flight of F-51's on that day told me that what he saw was no planet. While he and his wing man were climbing, and before the clouds obscured it, they both got a good look at the UFO, and it was getting bigger and more distinct all the time. As they climbed, the light began to take on a shape; it was definitely round. And if it had been Venus it should have been in the same part of the sky the next day, but the pilot said that he'd looked and it wasn't there. The ATIC report doesn't mention this point.*

*I remember asking him a second time what the UFO looked like; he said, "huge and metallic" — shades of the Mantell Incident.<sup>4</sup>*

The August 1950 issue of True states the following:

*Early on the day of March 8, 1950, three TWA pilots at Vandalia airport, the municipal field for Dayton, Ohio, were among the many observers of a gleaming object that hovered in the sky at high altitude. They were W. H. Kerr, D. W. Miller, and M. H. Rabeneck. All noted the strange appearance of the object, which, though small to the eye, was presumably huge since it was visible at great height.*

*Meantime, other observers at Vandalia had phoned Wright Field, headquarters of Project Saucer. Scores of Air Force pilots and ground men watched the disk as four fighter planes raced up in pursuit. The mysterious object streaked vertically upward, hovered for a while miles above the earth, and then disappeared.*

*Later, Captain Kerr made a report to the Civil Aeronautics Authority. A C.A.A. Official said that they already had a full report coming from Vandalia, with affidavits from twenty qualified witnesses.*

*Captain Rabeneck's observation, made through binoculars, has a special value. He happens to be an amateur astronomer of considerable experience.*

*"One thing is certain," he told Captain N. G. Carper, chairman of the TWA unit of the Air Line Pilots Association. "This was no star, planet, meteor. . . . Not that I believe that any air-line pilot who saw the thing would need an astronomer to tell him that."*

*A news story from Wright Field next day said the object had been identified as the planet Venus — although it had been seen in broad daylight, when Venus is practically invisible. When the C.A.A. report reached Washington, I asked to see a copy. I was told it had been rushed to Air Force Intelligence. When I asked the Air Force to let me see it, I was told the report had been sent to Wright Field. Since then, the C.A.A. has officially told me that all such cases reported to them are "in the province of the military" and therefore confidential. I got that answer when I inquired whether the South Bend radio-range operator had seen the Saucer reported by Flight 117. In spite of this, the Air Force still insists that Project Saucer has been disbanded, its investigation ended.<sup>5</sup>*

### **Blue Book file**

**E**xamining the Blue Book file, the information collected there does not quite reflect what we find in Ruppelt's book or the NICAP files. Based on what is in the files, there seems to have only been an F-80 and F-51 involved in chasing the UFO (not two to four F-51s as the other sources indicate).

The file is pretty complete including the results of the ATIC investigation mentioned by Ruppelt. All of the principle witnesses, including the F-51 pilot (contrary to what Ruppelt had stated), were interviewed. It is probably best to list the sequence of events based on what is in the files<sup>6</sup>:

0650 AM EST - Mr. George Barnes, Dayton air traffic controller, reported seeing an object in the ENE at a bearing of about 70 degrees. It moved rather fast, was bullet shaped, bright, and left a vapor trail. It stopped at a bearing of 120 degrees after five seconds. The angle of elevation the entire time was 15 degrees.

0715 AM EST - Mr. Barnes calls others to view the object. Chief air traffic controller, Mr. Sherman Seydler and Miss J. Kesling, as well as a few others, all viewed the UFO. It appeared to be a sphere made of Aluminum. Mr. Fordham also saw the object and, based on the statements of Mr. Barnes, assumed it was some form of meteor that had been captured into orbit around the earth. To him it appeared to be a weather balloon. TWA flight 21 was coming into Vandalia airport. The pilot, D. W. Miller, was told to look for the object. He did not see it until he turned into a south/southwest direction. According to Mr. Seydler, it took Miller fifteen minutes to finally see the object and it was not very clear to him. Mr. Barnes then called Patterson control tower.

0730 AM EST - Mr. Stevens, the weather bureau chief, arrived at the tower and observed the object in binoculars. He stated it looked like a cosmic ray balloon and it moved against the wind.

7:45 AM EST - Captain Robert Howe was told to look for a UFO by the Patterson control tower. They had been informed that two airline pilots had reported seeing a UFO to the Vandalia tower. The UFO was approaching from the northwest and was described as a long slender body. The Vandalia control tower could see the UFO in binoculars.

0800 AM EST - Lt. Colonel Dale Shafer, Chief Operations Officer of the Vandalia National Guards squadron, went outside to see what the excitement was about. He went to the tower and observed the object in binoculars. He did not see details that some of the others saw and, to him, it looked like a bright star.

0810 AM EST - Major Chilstrom took off in an F-80 in search of the UFO. Vandalia tower reported seeing the object for the next hour at an azimuth of 155-160 degrees and an altitude over 30,000 feet.

0830 AM EST - Captain Howe calls for radar assistance but no radar was able to track the object. Vandalia reports they are trying to vector Major Chilstrom in his F-80 towards the UFO with no success.

0900 AM EST - Colonel Shafer, based on what Mr. Barnes had told him, gets into his F-51, and tries to intercept it. He reported that he went up to 38,000 feet and followed it for 20-30 minutes along a bearing of 165-170 degrees azimuth. He then returned back to the airport. Shafer assumed it was some sort of "heavenly body" and checked with an Astronomy professor at the University of Dayton (Newspaper reports stated this was Dr. Louis Saletel). He reported that the professor told him it was the planet Venus.

1000 AM EST - Vandalia tower lost the object from view because it had disappeared behind cloud cover.

1130 AM EST - The Radar electronic subdivision called and stated they had an unknown target (100 miles width) 35 miles east of their station at a relative bearing of 105 degrees on their SCR-584 radar. Sgt. Guzi, the radar operator, stated that the signal was very large and exhibited random motion, which indicated, to him, that it was not due to weather. He had reported that the bearing changed over an area of 90 degrees and range of 20-40,000 feet. Electronics branch experts Mr. R. L. James and Mr. R. A. Johnson went to the radar site. They felt the contact looked like it was due to weather conditions. An F-80 was vectored to the location of the target and they reported only seeing ice laden clouds at 10,000 feet.

1140 AM EST - The Radar site had lost the target since it had approached within 15 miles of the airfield.

The file also included several newspaper clippings. They stated that three other F-51 pilots, Captain William Littlejohn, Captain Charles Cook, and Major Henry Sturtevant also took off in search for the elusive object. There is no indication if they saw anything. There is mention in the Blue Book file of a Colonel Paul, who, after 1030 AM, sent up observation aircraft. It is possible that these are those aircraft since Lt. Colonel Shafer made no mention of having any wingmen with him. As far as we know, he was the only pilot in an F-51 that saw and pursued the UFO that morning.

Keyhoe, in his True magazine article, mentioned three TWA personnel seeing the object:

- D.W. Miller - The only pilot mentioned in the Blue Book file and he had difficulty finding it until directed where to look.
- W.H. Kerr - Another pilot, who filed a CAA report. His description in the "UFO Evidence" is that all he saw was a "gleaming object at high altitude". In the True article it was stated that the object was "small" and "hovering". One can summarize this description to be some form of stationary bright point source of light above the plane's altitude.
- M.H. Rabeneck - Observed the object through binoculars indicating he probably was on the ground. Rabeneck stated it could not have been a star or planet and that he was an amateur astronomer. Rabeneck's story did not appear in the media and he is not in the Blue Book file. His story is apparently second hand because Keyhoe quotes the chairman of the TWA Airline pilots association. That makes one wonder about the story's accuracy.

## Analysis

**B**lue Book determined this to be Venus. It is important to note that Venus was at greatest brilliancy the morning before (March 7) and was shining at magnitude -4.4. Through binoculars, Venus would have appeared to be a thin crescent if the binoculars were stable and of sufficient magnification. Even though sunrise was at 6:58 PM EST, Venus would still have been easily visible, at this magnitude, until about 7:15-7:30. Since the observers were already tracking it, they should have been able to follow it in daylight for several hours especially if they used binoculars.

The next step is to compare the azimuth and elevation of Venus for Dayton Ohio and what values can be found in the Blue Book report:



Time (EST)	Reported Azimuth/Elevation	Azimuth of Venus	Elevation of Venus
0650	120/15	128	20
0745	None	140	27.5
0810	155-160	146	30
0830	155-160	151.5	32
0900	165-170	159.5	34.5
0930	165-170	168.5	36
1000	None	177.5	37
1130	None	204	33.5

These values indicate they were looking in the same part of the sky where Venus was located. There was good reason that Blue Book considered Venus to be the explanation.

I also tried to see if it was possible this was a research balloon but this seemed unlikely. I could not find any mention of research balloons in the Stratocat directory or the Newspaper Archive. I would think that Lt. Colonel Shafer would have been able to see the balloon from 38,000 feet and observers with binoculars would have seen the teardrop shape. Therefore, the possibility this was a research balloon seems unlikely.

There is only one "fly in the ointment" for the Venus explanation. The initial witness, Mr. Barnes, said he saw the object move from the NE to SE in about five seconds and leave a trail. This is similar to the story he told to the media, where he stated it was shaped like a bullet and had left a trail.<sup>7</sup> ATIC investigators suggested he had been working on the night shift and probably was fatigued. I think he might have seen a meteor that disappeared near Venus and then merged the two observations together. After this initial observation, Barnes began to point towards the object everyone else was looking at. At that point, Barnes now described it as a "silver ball". This acted just like Venus so one has to assume that Mr. Barnes either made a mistake about his initial observations or combined two events into one.

There is also the radar contact. Contrary to what Ruppelt and NICAP state, there is no relationship between the radar contact and the visual observations. The radar contact did not even appear until after the UFO was no longer visible! To top it off, that contact was to the east, while the last sighting of the UFO was to the south. Trying to tie the two together is just wishful thinking. As Mr. Johnson wrote, based on his observation of the radar contact and what the F-80 sent to investigate discovered, it seems likely that this contact was due to weather.

## Saucer Reports Probably Only Planet Venus

DAYTON, (UP)— Trained astronomical observers said today that a "flying saucer" sighted here and in Mexico yesterday probably was only the planet Venus.

The mysterious "object" appeared high in the sky over Dayton Municipal Airport yesterday about the same time observers in four Mexican cities reported "flying saucers" overhead.

Lt. Col. Dale Shafer of the Ohio Air National Guard took his F-51 up to 38,000 feet to look for the object over Dayton, then said he felt "damn foolish about the whole thing." The object did not move at all and apparently was a star or some kind of celestial body, he said.

But other observers didn't agree. George Barnes, control tower official at Dayton Municipal Airport, saw what appeared to be a "silver ball" through his binoculars. It moved from southeast to southwest and was "bullet shaped with vapor trailing behind it," he said.

Other pilots, including jet pilots from Wright-Patterson air base, also went up but had nothing definite to report.

The Mexican "saucers" were spotted over the cities of Guadalupe, Ciudad Juarez, Mazatlan and Durango. Officials at the Mexican naval station at Mazatlan watched what they said was a flying saucer "almost stationary" over the coastal city.

No one except the newspaper *Limas Noticias* in Mexico City was able to offer a good description of the phenomena. Its Durango correspondent said "the saucer has some small wings and is almost egg-shaped. It appears to be of aluminum."

Astronomers pointed out that the planet Venus shines very brightly this time of year.

## Conclusion

All of the verifiable information indicates what was seen that morning was Venus. One might argue about the radar contact, which had no bearing on the original sighting, but it seems that the experts had their say on that. It is possible that Barnes' initial observation was of a meteor but, after that observation, the object he was observing was Venus. This sighting should not be considered "Best Evidence" and cleared from the list.

## Notes and references

- Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 130
- ibid. P. 84
- ibid. P. 76
- Ruppelt, Edward. The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects. New York: Doubleday 1956. P. 72-5
- Keyhoe, Donald. "Flight 117 and the flying saucer". True magazine. August 1950 Available WWW: <http://www.project1947.com/fig/trueaug1950.htm>
- "Case file March 8, 1950 - Dayton, Ohio" Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9614003>
- "Saucer reports probably only planet Venus". Norwalk Reflector Herald. Norwalk, Ohio. March 9, 1950. P. 8

## An observation about Ruppelt

As I continue to go through the Blue Book files and read Ruppelt's book, I begin to wonder about the accuracy of Ruppelt's writings. For instance, the infamous "Estimate of the situation" seems to only exist in Ruppelt, and a few others, memories. Nobody has ever found solid evidence that such a document even existed and the only study that approaches what Ruppelt described was air study number 203, which was written about the same time. Because of these perceived inconsistencies, I am beginning to wonder, "Can we trust Edward Ruppelt's book to be an accurate account of what transpired in the early years of Projects Sign, Grudge, and Blue Book?"

I recently have been re-reading the book, "Shattered Sword: The Untold Story of the Battle of Midway". The authors of the book did a lot of research about the battle and discovered that certain "facts" about the battle were not facts at all but myths that were created by a Japanese officer, Mitsuo Fuchida, who was the Japanese air group commander at the battle of Midway. He wrote a book in the early 1950s about the battle and vividly described what had happened on the Japanese carriers. American authors had copied what he had written over the years, and as a result, his version of events have become accepted without question. [However, Fuchida seems to have embellished quite a bit and the authors of this book demonstrate this convincingly.](#) Fuchida probably was motivated by wanting to portray the Japanese as only moments away from winning the Battle of Midway before suffering a reversal that doomed the Japanese Kido Butai. [A similar problem occurred with the Soviet Union's account of the battle of Prokhorovka in July 1943.](#) Of course, that probably had to do with the Soviet Union's portrayal of them winning the "greatest tank battle ever" against hundreds of German Tiger tanks (German records show that there weren't very many Tiger Tanks in the area) instead of them wasting hundreds of their own tanks in a reckless charge. I remember reading "The tigers are burning" where the author (Martin Caidin) repeated this incorrect account of that battle because this had become "accepted history". History is full of these sort of mistakes and it is up to the historians to research and correct them.

This brings me back to Ruppelt. Based on what we know about these type of "point of view" writings is that it is possible that Ruppelt may have misrepresented certain aspects about various cases in order to sell his book or was working on faulty memory. The old Chinese proverb states that *"the palest ink is better than the best memory"*. Ruppelt was working from two memories about the March 8, 1950 event in his book. The first was the memory of the people he described, which was several years old at the time. Their descriptions contradict the facts that are found in the Blue Book file and what was reported in the media. The second memory is Ruppelt's recollection of what they told him. Did he accurately recall the stories? Did he remember what he wanted to remember? Did he, consciously or unconsciously, alter those stories to make them better? We do not even know if these stories are of the same event because we have no evidence these individuals were even there. Because we are working on second hand stories told years after the event, we have to be skeptical of these tales. When it comes to the March 8, 1950 case, there seemed to be very few arguments against the Venus explanation in the media accounts. Only Mr. Barnes objected publicly. Radar operator Guzi, who may have been the master sergeant in Ruppelt's narrative, argued against the radar target being from weather and his objections were noted in the report. That being said, his protests seemed to have been overruled by the radar experts and confirmed by the search for the radar contact by the F-80, which came up empty except for some clouds of ice. As a final note, most of the witnesses, who had been part of the Grudge investigation, presented information that was consistent with the Venus explanation.

I am not stating that Ruppelt was a bold-faced liar. I am simply stating that Ruppelt may have taken some liberties in his writings, blindly accepted what people told him, or his personal memories of what people told him were flawed. In my opinion, there are just too many inconsistencies in his writings with the known record to consider his book 100% accurate. One should not "throw out the baby with the bath water" but we have to realize that this baby may not be as clean as some want it to be.

# THE 701 CLUB: CASE 7359: PACIFIC APRIL 24, 1961

Don Berliner's describes the case as follows:

*April 24, 1961; 200 miles SW of San Francisco, California (35° 50' N., 125° 40' W.). 3:34 a.m. Witnesses: aircraft commander Capt. H.J. Savoy and navigator 1st Lt. M.W. Rand, on USAF RC-121D patrol plane. One reddish-white, round object or light, similar to satellite. Observed for 8 minutes.<sup>1</sup>*

Brad Sparks states:

*April 24, 1961. 200 miles SW of San Francisco, Calif. (35°50' N, 125°40' W). 3:34 a.m. (PST). 551st AEW&C Sq aircraft commander Capt. H. J. Savoy and navigator 1st Lt. M. W. Rand, on USAF RC-121D radar patrol plane at 11,000 ft saw reddish-white round object or light, similar to satellite or aircraft, angular size of pinhead at arm's length, moving W to E, tracked through sextant from 29°55' elevation 140° azimuth (SE) disappearing at the horizon at 50° (or 60° text barely legible) azimuth. No sound, no trail, weather clear, check for Echo satellite negative. (Sparks; Berliner; Jan Aldrich-NICAP; AFRHA index for 551st AEW&C Sq History)<sup>2</sup>*

Everything associated with this sighting suggests a satellite but Project Blue Book checked and Echo was not making a pass over that region at this moment in time. Could it have been another satellite?

## The Blue Book file

The Blue Book file does not contain very much. It only has a single message with these particulars<sup>3</sup>:

- The aircraft was an RC-121 at 11,000 feet flying on a course of 140 degrees true at 180 knots.
- The Navigator was taking a fix on the north star when he saw the object at 1134Z. He measured the objects initial elevation at 29 degrees 55 minutes and 140 degrees relative bearing. Relative bearing is the bearing relative to the motion of the aircraft. Since the aircraft's motion was towards 140 degrees, the relative bearing would have been 140 degrees relative to that direction. This means the position would have been 280 degrees azimuth (not 140 as Sparks wrote). Most relative bearings are in a clockwise direction. However, it is possible that there was a mistake in reporting the relative bearing (as well as the elevation). This seems possible considering the fact that the navigator stated he was taking a fix on the north star when it was first observed.
- The object was described as planet-like, round, the size of a pinhead, and reddish-white in color.
- It disappeared on the horizon at 050 degrees true after 8 minutes (which would have been 1142Z). It was traveling from west to east.
- Both observers (navigator and aircraft commander) stated the object looked like the Echo satellite.
- The record card states that Blue Book checked with Space Track and they stated the Echo satellite was not visible.

## Analysis

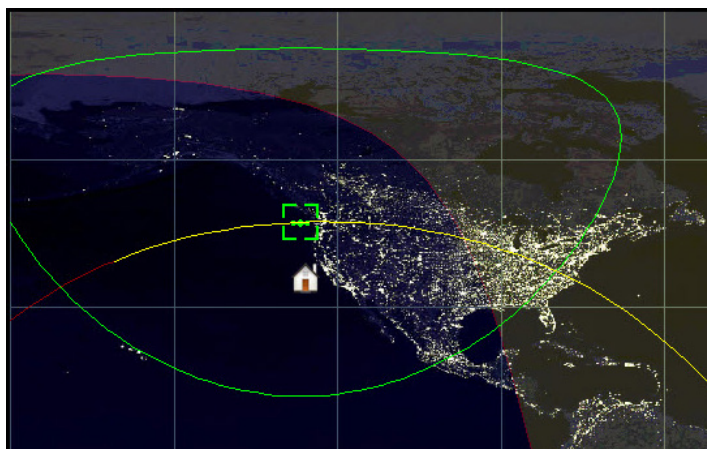
As I previously stated, the description sounds like a satellite was seen. However, Blue Book had stated that Space Track stated it was not the Echo satellite making me wonder if there might have been another satellite they did not check. While I was discussing this case with Herb Taylor, he suggested that I check the Echo satellite track just to make sure. I went to Jonathan's space page and selected the Two Line Elements (TLEs) for April 25th, 1961<sup>4</sup>:

```
1 00049U 60009 A 61115.51857470 .00000743 +00000-0 +00000-0 0 00499
```

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2 00049 047.2599 170.2313 0354267 159.3353 201.4061 12.29239146031405
```

```
3 00049 1 NOR Earth JCMWWW/S00049
```

I then ran the numbers in Heavensat and discovered that Echo DID make a pass over the region for the time in question.







I was even more surprised to see that the Echo satellite pretty much matched the observations and it passed close to Polaris, which was the star the Navigator was using for a fix when he saw the object.

According to the computed track, the satellite came out of Earth's shadow at azimuth 290 degrees azimuth and elevation 10 degrees. Its maximum altitude was above the north star at about elevation 40 degrees. This was around the time reported as initial observation (1134Z). The Echo satellite reached the horizon around azimuth 70 degrees at time 1144Z. There are some conflicts regarding the values in the single message and what we know from the track Heavensat computed. However, the track is close enough to what was reported to consider it a satisfactory match.



Worried that I made a mistake, I decided to run the same orbit on Heavensat for two other cases, where Space Track had determined it was the Echo satellite. That would have been April 26 and May 3. Both were pretty good matches. The only possible answers for the mistake on April 24th are that Space Track must have made an error in their calculation or the information exchange between Blue Book and them introduced some sort of data error. It is not that surprising that something like this could occur since it seems that some of these queries may have involved a telephone call, where a mistake could have been made. If it were a verbal communication, a mix-up in the details could have occurred resulting in a false negative.

If one wanted to be picky about the values in this plotted path, one could suggest that Echo doesn't match and that there were two objects on parallel tracks. One being Echo and the other being an unidentified. That seems unlikely since both witnesses would have seen the Echo satellite and made note that there were two objects. Any minor differences in the track and that reported by the witness can be explained by observational error or minor errors in the TLEs or the program I am using.

## Conclusion

To me this case is solved as the Echo satellite. There are some minor differences between what my track shows and what the observations were but they are not significant enough to doubt the explanation. This should be removed from the Blue Book unknowns as well as the Weinstein catalogue.

## 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. "Case file - April 24, 1961 - 3550N 12540W (Pacific)". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/8677070>
4. McDowell, Jonathan. "Historical two line elements for Sat #0049". Jonathan's space page. Available WWW: <https://www.plan-4589.org/space/elements/00000/S00049>

## Project Blue Book case review: January - June 1962

This is the latest edition of the Project Blue Book case review covering January through June 1962. Like the previous evaluations, I tried to examine each case to see if the conclusion had merit. I added comments to help clarify the explanation or if I felt it was not correct or adequate.

### January 1962

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
Jan-Feb	Morgantown, WV	Meteor	Agreed. It could be classified as insufficient data because of no exact date. However, the description sounds like a fragmenting meteor, which makes it a possible meteor.
Jan	Santurce, Puerto Rico	Balloon	Agreed. It could be classified as insufficient data because of no exact date. However, the description sounds like a balloon, which makes it a possible balloon.
2	West Germany	Insufficient data	Agreed
3	Ohio - Indiana area	Meteor	Agreed
4	Xenia, OH	Meteor	Agreed
5	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
5	Pacific	Satellite	No satellite visible. Brightness of Venus going north. During evening twilight. Possible aircraft.
6	Adak, AK	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite (Contrary to Blue Book's notes, there was a pass visible during that time period).
6	Humboldt, KS	Meteor	Agreed
8	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite (Contrary to Blue Book's notes, there was a pass visible during that time period).
9	ESE Pacific	Meteor	Agreed
14	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite (Contrary to Blue Book's notes, there was a pass visible during that time period).
15	Monroe, LA	Stars	Insufficient data. Missing duration. Possible this was caused by military flares dropped by aircraft (witnesses looking towards Military Operating Area).
15	Atlantic	Aircraft	Agreed
15	Las Cruces, NM	Meteor	Agreed
16	Vandalia, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
17	Lynn, MA	Unreliable report	14 year old reporting. Possibly Stars Vega and Capella being mixed up as one object. Description sounds like stars.
22	Kirksville, MO	Balloon	Agreed. Lower level winds from SW. No data for upper level winds but most often easterly during this time of year.
26	Miami, FL	Aircraft	Possible birds. There is nothing that can be seen in the photographs other than star trails and dust/scratches. Description of objects indicate objects were vague shapes and not sharp points of light.
28	Pacific	Meteor	Agreed
28	Bethel, AK	Aircraft	Agreed
28	Morehead, KY	Birds	Agreed
29	South Carolina - Puerto Rico	Missile	Agreed. Titan missile launch.
1/29-3/1	Ganado, AZ	Mirage	Regulus. Witness did not get elevation but description sounds like the witness was viewing Regulus through an inexpensive achromatic refractor, which produced the purple fringing and blurry image. The same can be said for the 3/1 sighting.
30	St. Paul, MN	Meteor	Agreed

31	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite (Contrary to Blue Book's notes, there was a pass visible during that time period).
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### February 1962

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
2	Muskwa, BC, Canada	Meteor	Agreed
2	Atlantic	Meteor	Agreed
3	Iceland	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
11	Carswell AFB, TX	Meteor	Agreed
12	Hutchinson, KS	Meteor	Agreed
12	Winnemucca AFB, NV	Insufficient data	Agreed. Radar data only included altitude. No azimuth or range.
12	Rolesville, NC	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft. No duration listed but description indicates aircraft.
12	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
14	Miami, FL	Aircraft	Echo Satellite. Witness stated it disappeared in vicinity of moon. Echo went into shadow when it was near the moon.
15	Childers, TX	Meteor	Agreed
17	Pacific	Meteor	Agreed
18	Shreveport, LA	Meteor	Agreed
18	Baldwinsville, MA	Meteor	Agreed (Witness was 13-year old and listed time as 2m30s. However, he also stated it was traveling at 7500 mph. Form filled out two months after the event introducing errors)
19	Mobile, AL	Venus	Agreed. Venus setting in west.
21	Aliwal North, South Africa	Satellite	Agreed. Physical specimen. Evaluated as part of John Glenn's Atlas Booster.
21	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
22	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
23	Luzon, Phillipines	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
23	San Juan, Puerto Rico	Meteor	Agreed
23	St. Croix, West Indies	Insufficient data	Meteor. Probably same meteor seen from San Juan.
23	Near Bermuda	Meteor	Agreed
25	Kotzebue, AK	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
26	Panama Canal	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
27	Brazil	Radio beacon from missile	Agreed. Physical specimen. Evaluated as part of Atlas Booster.

### March 1962

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Adana, Turkey	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft
1	Salem, NY	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
4	Sheffield, England	Insufficient data	Birch photographs. Probable Hoax. See <a href="http://magoniamagazine.blogspot.com/2013/12/ufo-hoaxing-part-two-story-of-alex-birch.html">http://magoniamagazine.blogspot.com/2013/12/ufo-hoaxing-part-two-story-of-alex-birch.html</a>
4	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
6	Miami, FL	Aircraft	Visual sighting: Possible birds. Photograph appears to show an airplane.
10	New York, NY	Aircraft	Agreed
12	Bethel, AK	Moon	Agreed



14	Midway Island	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
15	Atlantic	Insufficient data	Agreed. No time given.
17	Pacific	Meteor	Agreed
17	East Orange, NJ	Aircraft	Agreed
17	Waden AFS, Osage, MN	Refraction of star	Agreed. Probably Sirius
18	La Puente, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
19	Chanute AFB, IL	Venus	Aircraft
22	Hyde Park, MA	Insufficient data	Birds
22	Bronx, NY	Contrail	Agreed
25	Pacific	Meteor	Agreed
25	Grandview, MO	Aircraft	Agreed
26	Ramstein AFB, Germany	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
26	Naperville, IL	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
26	Westfield, MA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27	Palmer, AK	Venus	<b>Case file missing</b>
31	Mackenzie Bay, AK	Aircraft	Agreed

### April 1962

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
Apr	West Manchester, OH	1. Hoax 2. Hoax	Possible meteor observation and mistaken identity. Witness said they saw something fall to the ground like a meteor and then produced the object. It was just a rock. Witness probably saw a bright meteor and, after misjudging the distance, thought this unusual rock was from the meteor.
Apr	Brooklyn, NY	Venus	Agreed
Apr/ May	Springfield, OH	Insufficient data	Agreed. 13-year old making a report one year after the fact.
2	Goose Bay, Labrador	Balloon	Agreed
3	Lake View, SC	Insufficient data	Possible contrails. 12-year old on newspaper route.
3	Atlantic	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
4	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
4	Wurtland, KY	UNIDENTIFIED	Possible Balloon (See SUNLite 12-2)
5	Pacific	Missile	Comet Seki-lines. No missile launch.
5	Pacific	Insufficient data	Contrail
6-10	Northern Hemisphere	Comet-Seki Lines	Agreed
7	Keesler AFB, MS	Balloon	Agreed. Physical specimen.
7	Formosa	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
8	San Juan, Puerto Rico	Meteor	Agreed
9	Hereford Inlet, NJ	Insufficient data	Agreed. Only mentions an orange-red flashing in sky ESE of location. No duration. No elevation.
10	Thayer, KS	Meteor	Agreed
11	Atlantic	Meteor	Agreed
12	Mayer, AZ	Chaff	Agreed. Physical specimen.
12	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Courier 1B rocket
12	Estacada, OR	Insufficient data	Venus. 12-year old made the sighting.. Directions confusing but appears to be star-like object in NW seen through telescope.
12	Pacific	Insufficient data	Agreed. Radar UFO. Insufficient information to evaluate.

14	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
15	Atlantic	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
18	Nellis AFB, NV	Insufficient data	Agreed. Radar track with limited information. No visual sighting. Only two azimuths and altitudes given with no range. Direction of travel was with the wind.
19	Eureka, UT and Rocky area	Meteor	Agreed
19	Pacific	Satellite	Possible aircraft. Error in longitude (listed as 249 E in message) but message indicates BB got the location right (COMNAVMar-iannas in message header). No known major satellite passes visible matching course described.
19	Pacific	Insufficient data	Echo Satellite or Midas 3. Time listed was 1212Z. Echo became visible at 1215Z and would have had a NW to E track. Midas 3 also became visible in the NE (heading NE) at time 1218Z.
19	Gulf of Mexico	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
22	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
22	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
22	Maplewood, NJ	Insufficient data	Venus
23	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
23	Kadena, Okinawa	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
4/23-5/16	Lincoln Park, MI	Venus	Agreed. No photographs in file.
23	USAF academy, CO	Meteor	Agreed
24	France	Insufficient data	Echo Satellite
25	Chicago, IL	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
25	Baker Lake, Canada	Meteor	Agreed
25	Pacific	Meteor	Agreed
26	Danville, IL	Balloon	Agreed
27	Iceland	Insufficient data	Echo Satellite (some conflicting data about azimuth at end of sighting but course indicates easterly course and not westerly)
28	Colona, MIC	Meteor	Agreed
28	Rochester, NH	Meteor	Agreed
28	Fort Worth, TX	Insufficient data	Aircraft. Witness reported lights like satellites but they were brighter than Echo. Echo does not match sightings. Durations indicate objects were possibly aircraft.
29	Edwards AFB, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed. UFOs recorded by X-15 during peak of flight path from rearward looking camera. Blue Book did not receive could not evaluate the limited strip of film sent. Objects later determined to be flecks of paint/ice. See <a href="http://magoniamagazine.blogspot.com/2014/01/fireflies.html">http://magoniamagazine.blogspot.com/2014/01/fireflies.html</a>
29	Indian house lake, CA	Betelgeuse	Venus
29	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.

### May 1962

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
May	Athens County, OH	Chaff	Agreed. Physical specimens.
May	USSR	Aircraft	<b>No case file</b>
May	Clinchco, VA	Balloon	Agreed
1	Alexandria, LA	Balloon	Capella
1	Pacific	Meteor	Echo satellite

1	Pacific	Insufficient data	Sirius
2	Dayton, OH	Insufficient data	Aircraft
2	Fairborn, OH	Meteor	Agreed
2	Southwest, OH	Meteor	Agreed
2	Fairborn, OH	Meteor	Agreed
2-3	Vandalia, OH	Venus	Agreed
3	Foreman, AR	Aircraft	Agreed
4	Coloma, MI	Meteor	Agreed
5	Kirksville, MO	Insufficient data	Aircraft. Observed by school children around dusk.
6	Dayton & Lebanon, OH	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
7	Danville, KY	Meteor	Agreed
8	SW Canton Island, Pacific	Aircraft	Agreed
9	Dayton, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
10	Kansas City, MO	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft
11	Milsap, TX	Meteor	Agreed
11	Pacific	Aircraft	Agreed
13	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
14-15	Chicago, IL	Insufficient data	Agreed. No direction given but Jupiter was visible in SE and could have been object. Seen on two successive mornings.
16	Charleston, WV	Meteor	Agreed
17	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
18	Santa Barbara, CA	Meteor	Agreed
19	Louisiana	Mirage	Five different reports. Observer A - meteor Observer B - In interview, stated he confused the moon for a UFO. Observer C - insufficient information in report with no directions Observers D and E - Venus
19	Navajo Ordinance Depot, AZ	Fireworks	Agreed
21	Lexington, MA	Reflection	Agreed. Observer saw objects for four seconds through windshield while driving at high speed. Objects appeared and then disappeared in same location of sky.
22	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
23	Philadelphia, PA	Reflection	Venus. Witness observed object in NW going in and out of clouds. BB got Zulu time incorrect because it was DST. Venus was visible at 0215Z in the direction described.
24	Albuquerque, NM	Balloon	Agreed
24	Indiana	Meteor	Agreed
24-5	Dayton, OH	Aircraft	Agreed. Ad plane.
25	Burlington, MA	Hoax	Agreed. Witness reported one year after event. Evaluation of photographs reveals inconsistent information indicating a potential hoax.
25	Westover AFB, MA	Meteor	Agreed
25	Dayton, OH	Meteor	Agreed
26	Westfield, MA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27	Palmer, AK	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
27-9	Troy, NH	Stars/Planets	Insufficient information. Witness did not give enough specific information to locate potential sources. No specific time or directions for second sighting. First sighting had no firm direction to evaluate.
28	Montana	Meteor	Agreed



28	NW US & SW Canada	Meteor	Agreed
5/30-6/7	Dayton & Yellow Springs, OH	Searchlight	Agreed.
May-Jul	Argentina	Insufficient data	Agreed. Report of physical fragments recovered but never submitted for analysis.

### June 1962

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
2	SW Canada	Balloon	Agreed
3	Dawson Creek, Canada	Balloon	Agreed
6	Pacific	Meteor	Insufficient data. Aircraft only witnessed a blue flash. No indication that an object was observed.
7	Hallet Station, Antarctica	Jupiter	Agreed
7	Lockbourne AFB, OH	Markak	Meteor
7	Rantoul, IL	Moon	Agreed
8	Biloxi, MS	Meteor	Agreed
8	Dayton, OH	Advertising light	Agreed
8	Dickinson, ND	Venus	Agreed
9	Laurel, MD	Psychological	Insufficient data. Witness wrote letter on this date describing an event a year prior. No specific date, times, or positional data.
12	Lake Britton, CA	Meteor	Agreed
13	Berlin, NH	Aircraft	Agreed
13	Pacific	Fomalhaut	Jupiter
14	Pueblo, CO	Aircraft	Agreed
15	Pacific	Meteor	Agreed
16	Knollwood, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
19	Columbus, GA	Venus	Agreed
19	Pacific	Satellite	Agreed. Transit 2.
20	Ubon, Thailand	Insufficient data	Agreed. Letter dated October 1963, requesting information about sighting on this date from this location. There is no record of any such sighting.
21	Indianapolis, IN	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
22	Hallet Station, Antarctica	Meteor	Agreed
22-3	Columbus, GA	1. Balloon 2. Aircraft 3. Astro 4. Misinterpretation	Insufficient data. Case file has limited information. Much of the text is blurry and difficult to read. The explanations sound correct but there is no way to properly evaluate the information.
25	Dayton, OH	Insufficient data	Jupiter
26	Dayton, OH	Venus	Agreed
27	Fairborn, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
27	SW of Cleveland, OH	Meteor	Agreed
28	Washington DC/Hyattsville, MD	Meteor	Agreed

28-30	Beloit, WI	1. Venus 2. Insufficient data	1. Jupiter 2. Agreed. Much of the report is vague and difficult to determine. Most sound like aircraft. Nighttime could be the stars Antares and Arcturus. However, the information is very limited.
29	Aycayo, Bolivia	Meteor	Agreed
29	Kettering, OH	Satellite	Agreed. Echo Satellite.
6/30-7/1	Richmond, VA	1. UNIDENTIFIED 2. Satellite	1. Courier 1B rocket 2. Agreed Echo Satellite

### Reclassification

I evaluated 195 cases in the Blue Book files from January through June 1962. In my opinion, 43 were improperly classified (about 22%). 18 (about 9% of the total number of cases/42% of the reclassifications) of these were listed as "insufficient information". This table describes these cases and how I felt they should have been classified.

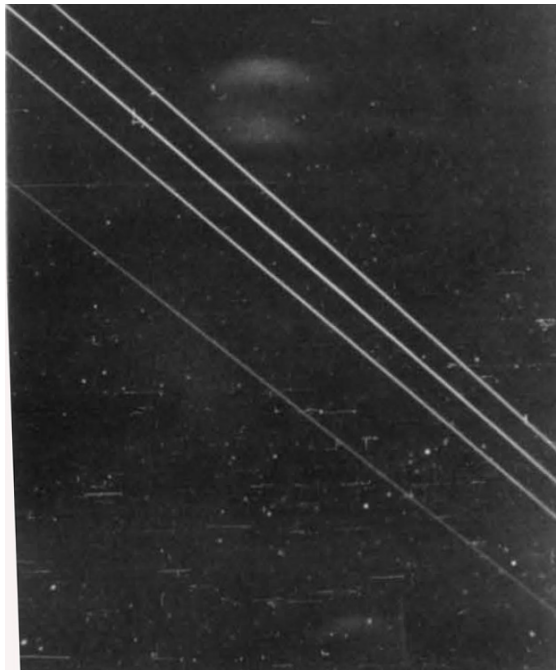
Date	Location	Reclassification	Reason
1/5	Pacific	Satellite	No satellite visible. Brightness of Venus going north. During evening twilight. Possible aircraft.
1/15	Monroe, LA	Stars	Insufficient data. Missing duration. Possible this was caused by military flares dropped by aircraft (witnesses looking towards Military Operating Area).
1/17	Lynn, MA	Unreliable report	14 year old reporting. Possibly Stars Vega and Capella being mixed up as one object. Description sounds like stars.
1/26	Miami, FL	Aircraft	Possible birds. There is nothing that can be seen in the photographs other than star trails and dust/scratches. Description of objects indicate objects were vague shapes and not sharp points of light.
1/29-3/1	Ganado, AZ	Mirage	Regulus. Witness did not get elevation but description sounds like the witness was viewing Regulus through an inexpensive achromatic refractor, which produced the purple fringing and blurry image. The same can be said for the 3/1 sighting.
2/12	Rolesville, NC	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft. No duration listed but description indicates aircraft.
2/14	Miami, FL	Aircraft	Echo Satellite. Witness stated it disappeared in vicinity of moon. Echo went into shadow when it was near the moon.
2/23	St. Croix, West Indies	Insufficient data	Meteor. Probably same meteor seen from San Juan.
3/1	Adana, Turkey	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft
3/4	Sheffield, England	Insufficient data	Birch photographs. Probable Hoax. See <a href="http://magoniamagazine.blogspot.com/2013/12/ufo-hoaxing-part-two-story-of-alex-birch.html">http://magoniamagazine.blogspot.com/2013/12/ufo-hoaxing-part-two-story-of-alex-birch.html</a>
3/6	Miami, FL	Aircraft	Visual sighting: Possible birds. Photograph appears to show an airplane.
3/19	Chanute AFB, IL	Venus	Aircraft
3/22	Hyde Park, MA	Insufficient data	Birds
Apr	West Manchester, OH	1. Hoax 2. Hoax	Possible meteor observation and mistaken identity. Witness said they saw something fall to the ground like a meteor and then produced the object. It was just a rock. Witness probably saw a bright meteor and, after misjudging the distance, thought this unusual rock was from the meteor.
4/3	Lake View, SC	Insufficient data	Possible contrails. 12-year old on newspaper route.
4/4	Wurtland, KY	UNIDENTIFIED	Possible Balloon (See SUNLite 12-2)
4/5	Pacific	Missile	Comet Seki-lines. No missile launch.
4/5	Pacific	Insufficient data	Contrail

4/12	Estacada, OR	Insufficient data	Venus. 12-year old made the sighting. Directions confusing but appears to be star-like object in NW seen through telescope.
4/19	Pacific	Satellite	Possible aircraft. Error in longitude (listed as 249 E in message) but message indicates BB got the location right (COMNAV Mariannas in message header). No known major satellite passes visible matching course described.
4/19	Pacific	Insufficient data	Echo Satellite or Midas 3. Time listed was 1212Z. Echo became visible at 1215Z and would have had a NW to E track. Midas 3 also became visible in the NE (heading NE) at time 1218Z.
4/22	Maplewood, NJ	Insufficient data	Venus
4/24	France	Insufficient data	Echo Satellite
4/27	Iceland	Insufficient data	Echo Satellite (some conflicting data about azimuth at end of sighting but course indicates easterly course and not westerly)
4/28	Fort Worth, TX	Insufficient data	Aircraft. Witness reported lights like satellites but they were brighter than Echo. Echo does not match sightings. Durations indicate objects were possibly aircraft.
4/29	Indian house lake, CA	Betelgeuse	Venus
5/1	Alexandria, LA	Balloon	Capella
5/1	Pacific	Meteor	Echo satellite
5/1	Pacific	Insufficient data	Sirius
5/2	Dayton, OH	Insufficient data	Aircraft
5/5	Kirkville, MO	Insufficient data	Aircraft. Observed by school children around dusk.
5/10	Kansas City, MO	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft
5/19	Louisiana	Mirage	Five different reports. Observer A - meteor Observer B - In interview, stated he confused the moon for a UFO. Observer C - insufficient information in report with no directions Observers D and E - Venus
5/23	Philadelphia, PA	Reflection	Venus. Witness observed object in NW going in and out of clouds. BB got Zulu time incorrect because it was DST. Venus was visible at 0215Z in the direction described.
5/27-9	Troy, NH	Stars/Planets	Insufficient information. Witness did not give enough specific information to locate potential sources. No specific time or directions for second sighting. First sighting had no firm direction to evaluate.
6/6	Pacific	Meteor	Insufficient data. Aircraft only witnessed a blue flash. No indication that an object was observed.
6/7	Lockbourne AFB, OH	Markak	Meteor
6/9	Laurel, MD	Psychological	Insufficient data. Witness wrote letter on this date describing an event a year prior. No specific date, times, or positional data.
6/13	Pacific	Fomalhaut	Jupiter
6/22-3	Columbus, GA	1. Balloon 2. Aircraft 3. Astro 4. Misinterpretation	Insufficient data. Case file has limited information. Much of the text is blurry and difficult to read. The explanations sound correct but there is no way to properly evaluate the information.
6/25	Dayton, OH	Insufficient data	Jupiter
6/28-30	Beloit, WI	1. Venus 2. Insufficient data	1. Jupiter 2. Agreed. Much of the report is vague and difficult to determine. Most sound like aircraft. Nighttime could be the stars Antares and Arcturus. However, the information is very limited.
6/30-7/1	Richmond, VA	1. UNIDENTIFIED 2. Satellite	1. Courier 1B rocket 2. Agreed Echo Satellite

## Summary

As usual, I found the reclassification of these cases challenging. The Echo satellite continued to play heavily in many of the sightings (35 cases or 18%). I continue to observe that there are significant amount of cases being reported by teens and per-teens. As I mentioned in the last issue, while some of these reports are pretty good, others have to be questioned based on the way they wrote their reports. Like the adults filing these reports, they were often influenced by reading some of the saucer literature.

Probably the most interesting case involved two sightings from Miami in January and March. My first thought was they were probably birds at night. However, this seemed to be disproved by one photograph that supposedly was taken of the second sighting. It showed four solid streaks on the film. I would think birds might not appear as bright or be in straight lines. After close examination, it appears the witness used a telephoto lens (probably a 135mm) based on his exposure time and length of the star trails. The field of view also looks small. The witness estimated the magnitudes as first to second magnitude but the streaks are far too strong for that. The witness did not list the film used but I suspect it was Tri-X (ISO 400) and my experience with fast moving objects of that magnitude is that they just don't record that well. The lights all converge at a consistent rate as they move through the field. This indicates to me that what was photographed were very bright lights a fixed distance apart moving away from the photographer. This evidence suggests the witness photographed an airplane and not the individual objects his sighting described. Another possibility I considered was these were telephone/power lines that were illuminated by a flashlight or other light source. I want to think this possibility is unlikely because it would point towards a planned hoax rather than a case of mistaken identity. Without a better image and more information, this is the best analysis I can present.



Next issue, I will perform a check of the second half of 1962.

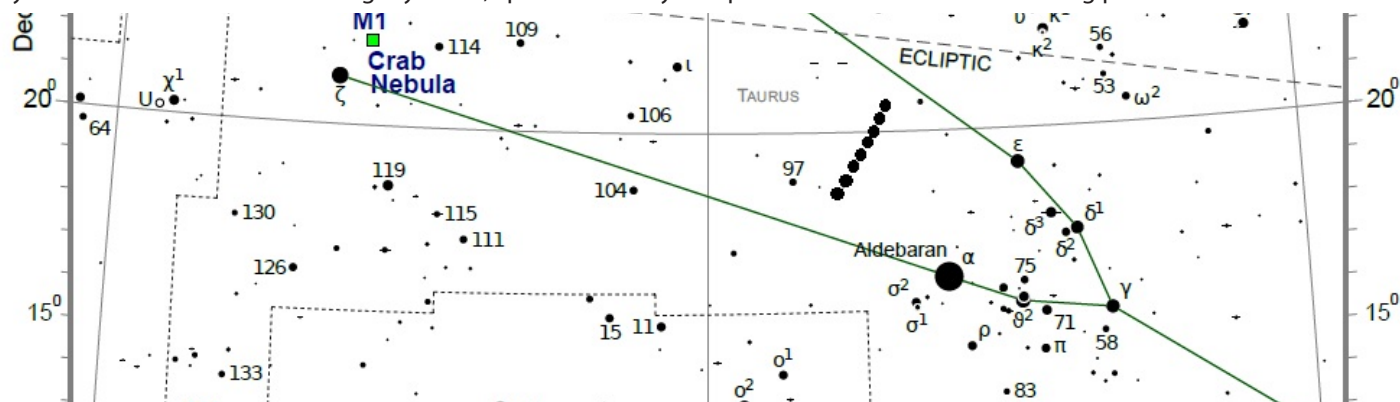
## References

1. "Project Blue Book investigations." Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/title/461/project-blue-book-ufo-investigations>
2. Project Blue Book archive. Available WWW: <http://bluebookarchive.org/> (Note: This website is no longer active but some of my files come from this location. It may become active again in the future.)
3. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA/ESRL Radiosonde Database. Available WWW: <https://ruc.noaa.gov/raobs/>
4. "Stratospheric balloons: Chronological lists of launches worldwide since 1947" StratoCat. Available WWW: <http://stratocat.com.ar/globos/indexe.html>
5. "Space History Chronology". Astronautix. Available WWW: <http://www.astronautix.com/s/spacehistorychronology.html>
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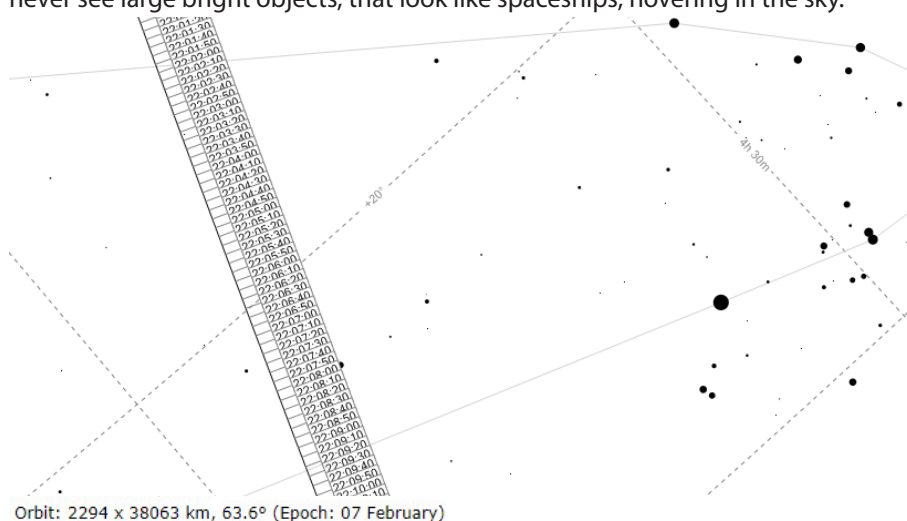


# AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION

On February 6, I got a chance to go out and perform some astronomical observations and imaging. It is unusual in New Hampshire to have winter nights that have clear skies, mild temperatures (above 20F), and light winds. The night was eventful in that I managed to locate some Herschel objects with my 10-inch and image several deep sky objects. I also got to test out my new Sony A7 camera. As the evening wore on, I began to pack up much of my gear as I finished using it. At 2204 EST, I was waiting for the last few images of the Gull Nebula to finish and enjoying the night sky when I noticed something peculiar in the constellation of Taurus. There was a "new" star above the Hyades. It was not very bright. As I watched, it faded. I was intrigued at this point and kept watching the location. As expected, it reappeared again. I watched some more and it came and went two more times before I decided to start making some careful observations. I timed it and discovered it was going through a 12 second cycle. It also was drifting very slowly southward. At this point, I figured this was some sort of very high altitude satellite. It is the only thing that could explain it being visible so long after sunset. The next thing I wanted to do was to write down what I had observed and make a quick sketch. As I began to record the observation, I thought it might be worth it to get my camera out and record it. However, I looked up again and noticed that it had disappeared. It was no longer visible to the naked eye meaning it would be unlikely I could record it with my camera. After double checking my notes, I put them away and proceeded with what I was doing prior to this.



The next day, I contacted Ted Molczan with my observation. He quickly responded and, based on my observations, felt I had seen the Meridian 3 satellite, which was no longer functioning and in a Molniya orbit. Thanking Ted, I quickly checked Heaven's Above and confirmed his evaluation. According to Ted, the satellite was about 18,000 km away. Heaven's Above states that it was supposed to be only eighth magnitude. Yet, this was magnitude +3 to +4. I suspect this was tumbling and reflecting the sun just the correct way as to become visible. What this demonstrates is that satellites that are not supposed to be visible can become visible under the right conditions. During my Blue Book evaluations, I often reject satellites that were listed as being below naked eye visibility. Maybe I should reconsider this rule. Another thing, this observation demonstrates is what I have been saying for years. Amateur astronomers do see strange events in the night sky and will document them. However, I continue to wonder why they never see large bright objects, that look like spaceships, hovering in the sky.



Event	Time	Altitude	Azimuth	Distance (km)	Brightness	Sun altitude
Rises	12:03:50	0°	235° (SW)	11,946	9.0	31.5°
Reaches altitude 10°	12:10:03	10°	238° (WSW)	12,350	9.2	31.4°
Maximum altitude	20:23:06	65°	303° (WNW)	30,836	10.5	-35.9°
Drops below altitude 10°	22:52:09	10°	211° (SSW)	11,437	8.3	-58.3°
Sets	22:58:17	0°	205° (SSW)	11,033	8.2	-58.9°

