

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

You can keep talking in your own group (UFO believers), but it is like the converted talking to the converted... We need to present this information to the scientific world, in a fully acceptable scientific manner.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek (Chicago Sun Times May 12 1985)

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Cover: The planet Mercury was very prominent in the evening sky in April. My wife remarked that it looked like a plane and not a planet. I was able to convince her it was Mercury but it did appear to move in and out of the trees in the distance when it began to set. The image to the left shows what happens when you take the same photograph with a less than stable tripod.

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UFOs: Unresolved!

I must be a glutton for punishment because reading about UFOlogy and UFOs can be very frustrating. The logic used by some advocates can be mind boggling. Some UFOlogists, who consider themselves to be always right, will draw conclusions based on speculation, or biased interpretations of information, and then refer to them as irrefutable facts. They do not recognize the difference between establishing that something is a fact and stating that something is a fact without proof. This is the kind of thinking that keeps UFOs a mystery and does nothing to further the “study” of the subject.

As 2016 progresses, the UFO mystery continues to plod along the same way it has plodded along since the 1950s, when civilian UFO organizations started their crusade to discover the “truth” about UFOs. Exactly what is UFOlogy waiting for? Are they waiting for “disclosure”? Are they waiting for a big case that will resolve the issue once and for all? Maybe UFO organizations and leaders are happy with the status quo. It is easier to promote a mystery than solve one.

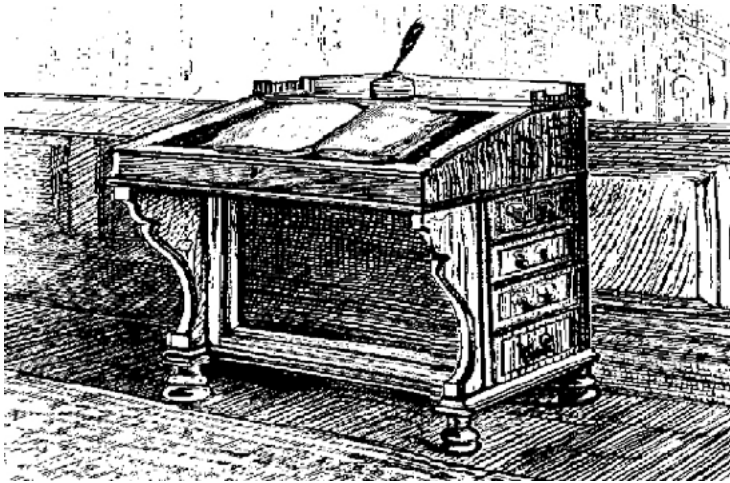
Speaking of solving mysteries, the Puerto Rico video story remains in limbo. Several members of the Puerto Rico Research Review (PRRR) group feel it was probably a lighter than air object (See SUNlite 7-6 and 8-2). Meanwhile, the Scientific Coalition for UFOlogy (SCU), has accused SUNlite, and other members of the PRRR, of not being “scientific” and that their paper, which was supposedly peer reviewed, is. Of course, peer review in UFOlogy is something akin to a rubber stamp by fellow proponents. If it had actually been peer reviewed, the errors in the report that were pointed out by the PRRR/SUNlite would never had occurred. The SCU has yet to release their corrected version of the original report, which was promised to be completed in February. Apparently, their members are too busy talking at UFO conferences and symposia to resolve the problems found in the original report. It is also possible that they just don’t want to admit that they made some mistakes and now recognize that a lighter than air object could possibly produce what is seen in the video.

Over the last few months, that has been very little in the way of significant UFO reports. There was one UFO event that made some noise involving an airline crew that saw a large light during its routine passage over the state of Utah. Although the crew never mentioned the word UFO, proponents seized on this being one of those spectacular UFO cases that might be “best evidence”. I think the investigators saw a prosaic source but then ignored it in favor of the exotic explanation. I address this case starting on page 6.

Another headline grabbing event was the release of the 2015 Canadian UFO survey. While UFO aficionados found the survey to be something to cheer about, I was not as receptive. I want to make it clear that I commend the effort of the survey. They take the effort to collect all those reports from various sources and then determine if they have probable explanations or not. They are the only organization, that I am aware of, that does this publicly. That being said, I am also critical of how the evaluation process is performed. Too many IFOs, or bad UFO reports, leak into the “unknown” category, which tends to inflate their statistics. I list my criticisms of the survey in this issue starting on page 10.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



Billy Cox is complaining about news coverage of the International UFO congress. If you let people promote this kind of nonsense at the congress, what do you expect? UFOlogy needs to clean up its act if it wants to become respectable.

The Arizona UFO event celebrated its 19th anniversary with the usual reposting of old stories. I have yet to see anything that contradicts what I wrote in SUNlite 2-3. I find it amazing that there are some who still think the 10PM event did not involve flares. This individual tried to make something out of video artifacts and state this proves the objects were not flares. Apparently, he has never read Dr. Maccabee's analysis of the lights. As Dr. Maccabee pointed out, this was not an uncommon event and flare drops have been recorded on several occasions since March of 1997. He used the example of videos from January of 1998, which turned out to be flares dropped by the Michigan ANG. So, when UFO proponents demand that the US military drop flares again, they are ignoring

their own data.

The Terra Obscura blog took a swipe at the UFO disclosure movement. His point about this all being a logical fallacy is important. Despite this problem, there are still many prominent UFOlogists, who insist that there is a some form of cover-up. While UFO proponents may dismiss disclosure movement promoters, like Stephen Greer, as crackpots, they still embrace the idea that a UFOs are being covered up by the US government.

Jaimie Maussan appears to have been given an honorary doctorate from the Mexican Institute of Leadership Excellence. According to the institutes's web site, the goal of this place of higher learning is to:

Form Men and Women Leaders of Excellence Higher values, principles and tools to potentiate their abilities, to contribute to building a better world, generating them a quality life and abundance, concerned about conservation and care our planet.

I wonder if they consider promoting frauds to the general public builds "a better world"?

Jack Brewer discussed some UFO talking points.. I particularly like this bullet:

The reasonable and intelligent person is not convinced by anecdotes, repetition and volume, but by facts and verifiable evidence.

Too often, UFO proponents will present anecdotes and second hand information as if they were facts. As I have pointed out in the past, it is a fact that these stories are told by the individuals but it is not a fact that they actually happened the way the person described. They can be made up or distorted by belief or time. When UFOlogists begin to accept this, they might make some progress in their pursuit of what UFOs really are.

Somebody recorded a UFO near my location. Alas, I was not there but I examined the video and am unimpressed. The objects in the distance are not in focus, which means the "orb" was probably a point source. Another point to consider is that the object was low on the horizon shortly after sunset and moved slowly towards the West or Southwest. I discussed this in SUNlite 6-6 and have dozens of photographs that mirror what is seen in the video. This is probably a distant airplane and its contrail lit by the sun

It seems that Vallee' and Aubeck's book, Wonders in the sky, has found a new critic. Marty Kottmeyer posted an entry on Robert Sheaffer's Bad UFOs blog. Marty points out that their entries about a Venusian moon was explained over a century ago! It makes one wonder about the book's research. The mere listing of mysteries is not the same as researching each to see if there are potential explanations. I have seen this many times in the field of UFOlogy (Ex: NICAP's The UFO evidence).

IPACO released a report exposing the 1952 Lac Chauvet photographs as fakes. Through the usual extensive analysis, they determined that the UFO was probably a clay pigeon in flight. It is an extensive read but worth it.

Kevin Randle has begun to recognize that UFOlogy has a serious problem. The availability of cameras have made it likely that a UFO event should be recorded from multiple locations but it hasn't happened yet. The excuses for why this has not happened are as numerous as there are UFO sightings. Meanwhile, amateur astronomers and NASA have been posting videos of meteor events for many years making it possible to compute orbits for the meteoroids that produced them and identify possible impact locations. These fireballs are rare events and one wonders why UFOlogy has yet to develop similar systems to capture a UFO event. How many UFOlogists have dash-cams in their car or camera systems pointed skyward at their own home? If they don't have such systems, I have to wonder, "why not"?

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

Nick Redfern posted a story about "spheres" from space. While Redfern suggests these mysterious objects may have been part of a rocket, he dismisses that possibility because the spheres appeared to have landed smoothly and did not leave signs of impact. The report that he is quoting is actually the report describing the news accounts of what happened. The idea that it landed "smoothly" was second hand information and not through direct observation of the person writing the report. Missing from Redfern's article is the fact that Ted Molczan explained this case almost two years ago. The mystery spheres actually came from the re-entry of a Delta rocket second stage (1979-072B). This is one of those UFO stories that can carry the label "Case closed".

Robert Hastings, UFOs and Nukes, film is now available for download at Vimeo. After asking for money to produce the film, Hastings is now asking for money to view the film. One would think that if he was interested in presenting this information to the general public to "benefit humanity", he would simply have put it up for all to see. Instead, it appears that it is going to be "pay per view". It reminds me about his debates with skeptics on the old Bad Astronomy forum. Most of his arguments were excerpts from his books with the added statement of "buy my book and learn more". Like most of UFOlogy, it seems that is more about the money and less about the message. I hope to take the time to watch the video and discuss it in a future issue of SUNlite.

Somebody thinks they found a crashed saucer on Google Earth. Unfortunately, the promoters of the find did not bother to look at the other historic images on Google earth. There is a dark spot visible in the same location going back a decade or more. This is probably some sort of structure that was put there for hunting or some other activity (like astronomy or bird watching). The pickup truck is a clue that it is something in use by an individual or group. If this were a UFO crash, the dark spot seen in other photographs from years past would not be there and there would have been a lot more than a pickup truck at the location.



Billy Cox is taking a page from Cheryl Costa's play book and putting up the number of UFO reports as something significant. Costa decided to total up all the UFO reports for Florida and break them down by "congressional district". I am not sure why she chose congressional districts since such things have changed over the years. Anyway, the highest number of UFO reports comes from congressional district 19. Her sample range was from 1944 to 2015! That is a rather large sample size and these are raw UFO reports so that does not mean much. Still, Billy finds this fascinating since the 19th congressional district is near Fort Myers, Florida on the southwest corner of the state. Cox seems to think that this low population area would have a low number of UFO reports because of the low population and lack of military bases. Perhaps the large number of reports may have to do with the amount of aerial activity that flies along the air corridors over the area. One can add to these numbers the amount of Coast Guard activity in the Gulf and military operations transiting between all the air bases in Florida. Of course, the increased activity may have something to do with type of people in that part of the state. Maybe there are more UFO advocates located in that region of the state. There are just too many variables to consider without evaluating each case.

Speaking of Cheryl Costa, she states that the smoking gun proof of UFO being something alien involves the STS-48 video and an old Billy Meier film . Both show a tell tale flash that she considers proof of something. Does she really consider Billy Meier a credible source? Things that make you go....Yikes! Meanwhile, the flash in the STS-48 video is probably related to the shuttle's RCS thrusters. If this is her "smoking gun", then she is on very shaky ground.

Open Minds published an article about how people can turn their computer into a UFO detector. Using open source software, created by Mark Lakum, and the computer's web-cam, one can record video of the sky and the software will identify any "unknowns". The examples he presents are interesting but it is difficult to determine if they aren't just balloons, birds, or distant aircraft. The only problem I have with the article is Lakum's claim that UFOs only last a few seconds, which makes the use of Cell phones impossible. Statistics have shown that the average duration of most UFO events are measured in minutes and not seconds. When I get a chance, I may give the software a try and test it against IFOs. It might be interesting to see what the results are.

The Roswell Corner

Why hasn't the Roswell slides ship sunk?

Because the scientists associated with analyzing the slides can't admit they made a mistake, the slides continue to be a source of derision from skeptics and proponents alike. Recently, Gilles Fernandez fenced with Mexico's number one alien biologist Dr. Rios. Rios made a foray into Gilles' Facebook group "UFO pragmatism", where he kept posting images from his blog. He never responded to any challenges to his work. I continued to ask how he determined that the woman was close enough to the body to use as a standard of measurement for the body. At one point he stated the woman was 30 CM from the body. I immediately pointed out that if she is 30CM behind the body, then the body would appear larger. For instance, if the body was 100 CM from the camera and the woman 130CM, then the body would appear 1.3 X larger than if it were next to the woman. Instead of discussing this point, Rios simply left the discussion! I thought of writing another article exposing more of his false assumptions and incorrect calculations but it would have been beating a dead horse. This video by Fin365 pretty much demonstrates the body in the photograph is the Palmer mummy despite Rios efforts to deny that they are two different corpses.

Meanwhile, Don Schmitt and Tom Carey seem to have finally admitted the photograph shows the mummified remains of a two year old boy as the placard states. If these two can finally admit they made a mistake, I have to wonder why Rios can't admit his error? I suspect that Rios was one of the original scientists that Schmitt claimed to trust in his original mea culpa after the placard was deblurred. Rios, after placing his reputation on the line, now will not consider the possibility that he might be wrong. That means that he is not interested in science but his belief and preserve his reputation. Either he is blinded by that belief or he knows that he is promoting a hoax. In either case, it makes him look foolish.

The annual Mogul offensive is early

Kevin Randle, and the other crashologists, normally wait until July to launch their annual Mogul offensive. This is where they repeat their same old arguments about why MOGUL is an IMPOSSIBLE explanation for the debris recovered at the Foster ranch. I have addressed these issues in my article "Crashology's last stand" in SUNlite 5-5. In that article, I demonstrated that many of the arguments against Mogul are one-sided interpretations of the documentation and are not facts as the Crashologists want everyone to believe. Mr. Randle fails to understand that to truly falsify the MOGUL hypothesis, he has to positively prove that the "cluster of balloons" (which is a term Crary used to describe several complete flights by the NYU team) that was launched on June 4th could not be the source of the debris at the Foster Ranch.

Just one example of Randle's rationalization is the "statement of fact" that the flight could not have been launched until daylight because the flight did not have permission to be launched at night. This argument was a cornerstone of Randle's rebuttal of MOGUL until he realized that flight #8 was launched before sunrise in early July. In order to correct this conflict, Randle concluded that they MUST have had special permission to launch that flight at night to coincide with the planned V-2 launch. There is no evidence to support this "special permission" to launch at night other than his statement of "because I said so". Randle also ignores why Flight #17 was launched in the evening, which was airborne after sunset. This occurred in September of 1947 so one must assume that the NYU team had special permission to launch this flight as well. If these special permissions were that easy to obtain, what prevents the NYU from having the same type of "special permission" for the "cluster of balloons" to be launched at night on June 4th?

This is the kind of rationalization by Randle, and the other crashologists, that is being used to falsify the MOGUL explanation. It fails to address all possibilities and demonstrates that their minds continue to remain closed to possibilities other than the one involving a crashed spaceship.

Another Roswell explanation?

During the Mogul debate on Kevin Randle's blog, Brian Bell proposed another possible theory for what "crashed" at Roswell. He suggested a back-engineered B-29 flown by pilots defecting from the Soviet Union. The bomber did have the range (The ferry range was about 5000 miles according to the standard aircraft characteristics) to make the trip. While, I find it an unlikely scenario, it is interesting to see how the crashed spaceship proponents reacted. They dismissed it because it was an explanation that is based on a very biased interpretation of witness testimony told decades after the event. Isn't that essentially what the ET crash proponents use for their theory? Things that make you go hmmm.....

He wasn't serious

Last year, Kevin Randle had stated on his blog that he thought the aliens may have crashed their spacecraft on purpose in order to announce to the human race they existed. In SUNlite 7-2, I commented about how ridiculous this theory seemed. Brian Bell mentioned this recently on Randle's blog, which prompted Kevin Randle to e-mail me about my comments. He told me that his statements were more of a joke than a serious theory. I pointed out that he stated it was a "favorite" theory of his and there appeared to be no attempt at humor. Randle assures me that this theory is a "favorite" only because it is "so far out there and funny". I guess that means we are still stuck with the infamous "lightning" theory that many of our planes can survive but alien spacecraft can not.

UPDATE ON CEFAE (ARGENTINA)

In the March-April issue of SUNlite there is a reference to an article by a misinformed staff writer of Latin Post¹ stating that the new Argentine government had closed the modest Air Force unit to study UFO phenomena, CEFAE². Fortunately, I am in close contact with the responsible of that agency, Commodore (ret) Rubén Lianza and can confirm that the information is false. Infringing the first principle of journalism, the source did not verify if the rumor was legitimate or not.

It is plainly untrue that the new Argentine Administration decided to shut down the official UFO agency. The new president Mauricio Macri may have discontinued other political initiatives of the former lady president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner but not the unit that investigates current UFO sightings reported to the Air Force.

CEFAE, acronym for Comisión de Estudio de Fenómenos Aeroespaciales (Aerospace Phenomena Study Committee), was created originally in 2011 and initially kept as a very low profile agency. It was reactivated on January 2015 with the recall of Commodore Lianza, who also surrounded himself by a number of civilian and military consultants. All of them are unpaid and their dedication is totally ad honorem. Therefore, no additional funds are spent in UFO research by the Armed Forces in Argentina. The mandate of CEFAE is to study any current UFO reports submitted to the Air Force authority from worried citizens. It works just a public service.

CEFAE is to publish an annual report with the results of its investigation, with full transparency. The first released report covers the resolution of 10 UFO reports, all of which were satisfactorily explained away and their causes were accurately characterized. It was published the first week of December 2015 (unrelated to the exit of the former presidency) because it covers the November 2014-November 2015 timeframe.

The agency does not require any operational expenditures, as the military or civil personnel used by CEFAE have their own salaries from their primary destinations, not receiving any extra income whatsoever by working or cooperating with CEFAE.

It has also been told that CEFAE is somehow related to the San Martín National University, which is plainly untrue. Again, these “journalists” are not telling the truth to the readers of the web community.

The origin of this bogus information appears to be as a simple case of using a (minor) decision taken during a past administration as a weapon to throw against the leaving government. Purely a game of politics that does not have anything to do with the real job and assignment of this small group of persons dedicated to clarify alleged anomalous UFO sightings that taxpayers report to the Air Force, yielding a transparent public service.

I can vouch for the honorability and seriousness of Commodore Lianza, who fulfills his work with method and objectivity. If this Committee, as it is today, persists, is enlarged, reduced or shut down in the future nobody can foretell so far. However, if it were ever closed, it will not be neither because of economic reasons nor by a lack of scientific protocols.

I hope this note settles the issue regarding the false rumors about CEFAE of Argentina.

Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos

Valencia (Spain), March 2015.

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References

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Editor Note: I want to apologize to readers for getting this information wrong. I should have checked up on the story rather than just publish the link. Thank you Vicente-Juan for the correction.



As is his habit, Billy Cox found another UFO case to promote on his blog.¹ The problem with his blog promotions is that he simply regurgitates the story being fed to him by the UFO investigator. As a news reporter, he seems to be uninterested in investigating these UFO cases beyond what he is told. This is nothing more than story telling.

This case involves a sighting by an aircrew over Utah, who reported seeing a mile wide area of light in front of them. UFO investigators then decided to determine if it was a real exotic object or not. The report that was produced looks good but, after closer examination, much of what is presented is subjective and interpreted with only one solution in mind.

The event

According to William Puckett's site, the first his group became aware of the event was when a radio host was monitoring air traffic communications. He had reported to Utah MUFON that an aircrew of a commercial flight had seen a UFO off to the right near the town of Nephi, Utah. This object supposedly paced the aircraft for several minutes.

Investigators filed a FOIA, which revealed that the airliner was flight 434 en route from San Francisco to Philadelphia. The time of the event was between 12:12 and 12:13 AM MST. Puckett's report has the recording of the conversation:

434: "You wouldn't happen to know what this bright orange square we are flying over is, would ya?"

ATC: "No. That's a good question...I am not sure what...is it off to your right side?"

434: "It is, like, directly off our nose right now. It is right below us. We have been watching it for a while, like, I don't know what it is. It is a perfect square and it is bright orange. What town are we next to. This town off our 2 O'clock low."

ATC: American 434, that is Nephi...Nephi, Utah²

This is the actual report of the aircrew, which, by itself, does not sound very spectacular and is different than what was originally reported by the person who was listening in on the radio traffic.

The UFO investigation

The investigation focused much of its attention on obtaining radar data to confirm the UFO event. It seems that UFOlogists like to use radar data as some form of ultimate proof that UFO events are real. However, they tend to follow Philip Klass' UFOlogical principle #9

*Whenever a light is sighted in the night skies that is believed to be a UFO and this is reported to a radar operator, who is asked to search his scope for an unknown target, almost invariably an "unknown" target will be found. Conversely, if an unusual target is spotted on a radarscope at night that is suspected of being a UFO, an observer is dispatched or asked to search for a light in the night sky, almost invariably a visual sighting will be made.*³

Puckett obtained FAA radar data and noted that between 12:08 and 12:15 AM there were multiple radar contacts to the southwest of the town of Nephi along Interstate 15.

Puckett states that these targets represent some true targets and they are not due to anomalous propagation. Because of the distance from the radar, it indicates that the contacts were very large. To rule out AP, he presents us with radiosonde data to demon-

strate this is true.

Puckett also feels that the ATC talking to flight 434 had the UFO on his radar:

In the recorded conversation starting just after 12:12 AM the crew was talking about their sighting and the FAA responded "you mean to the right." How did they know that? They knew because they had it on radar.⁴

He suggested that the redacted part of the tape contained all the pertinent information where the ATC described having the UFO on radar.

Puckett concludes that *"The radar shows a dense area of returns at the exact position and time reported by the pilot."⁵*

While Puckett sounds convinced, I believe he has overstated his case.

The radar data is not as convincing as advertised

I discussed this case with several skeptics and we had determined that Puckett took liberties in his analysis and there were some mistakes about his radar data analysis.

The first thing I noticed was that his radiosonde data was from the 0000Z and not the time of the event (0712Z). Therefore, it can not conclusively rule out anomalous propagation (AP). Another problem with his use of radiosonde data is that it is one sample point along the entire radar beam stretching from the radar site to Nephi. A temperature inversion at some point along the 88 miles from radar antenna to target might produce the results. Stating he has conclusively eliminated the possibility that these targets are not AP is not entirely accurate.

It is hard to analyze his targets without more data. Is it common to see these targets at this location at night? How strong were the returns? Neither of these questions were answered but there are several factors that Puckett does not consider:

- If these were the radar returns from a UFO that could be seen from 31,000 feet and was a mile wide, why wasn't it reported by travelers on Interstate 15, which ran right through the area of the targets? It was late at night but there are vehicles on a major interstate late at night. State troopers, truckers, and local police surely would have noticed such an obvious target hovering in the sky.
- The region of the targets was to their right, at a relative bearing of about 60 degrees at the time they were describing the object being in front of them. It was also about 12 miles away at closest approach, which means that they could not have flown over it. Contrary to what Puckett states, the radar data does not match the visual report by the aircrew. It is not an "exact match".

These important points tend to indicate that the UFO was not detected by radar and was not visible unless one were in the air.

The probable explanation

Puckett's report does make mention of a possible solution but he dismisses it:

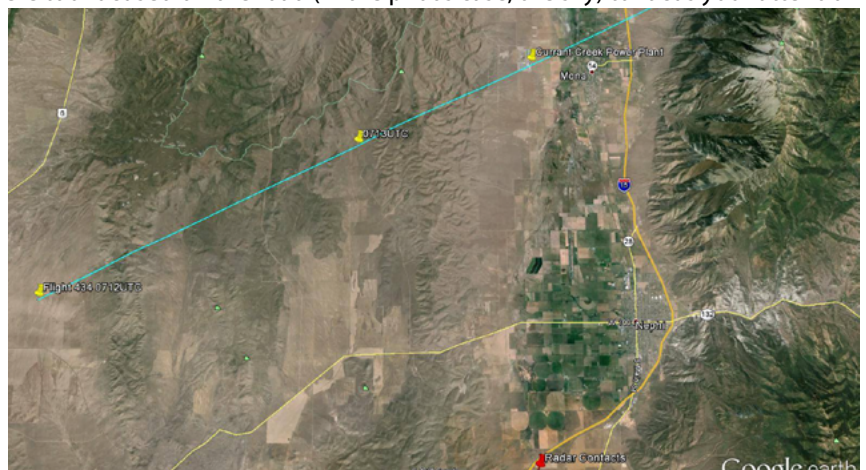
One investigator believes that the crew sighted lights from a local power point (Currant Creek Plant – Mona, UT). To me this doesn't explain the sighting as the conglomerate of radar returns suggests something unusual. Also I would expect that the same crew had flown this same route before. If this was true, why would they ask the FAA about the location?⁶

As mentioned, the radar data is not a match and can not be used as confirmation that the "bright orange square" was an airborne object. Puckett's other argument that the pilots would be quite familiar with the power plant does not consider some possibilities:

1. The aircrew never flew this route before.
2. The aircrew had flown over the region but not under conditions that the lighting was readily visible (clouds, ground fog, etc.).
3. The aircrew had never noticed the lights before. Imagine how many times you drive to work and never notice certain things until one day, you do notice it. Like the pilots you were too focused on the road (in the pilot's case, the sky) to focus your attention on something that is not of serious concern.

Like the radar data, Puckett turns assumptions into facts in order to satisfy the need to turn this UFO into something extraordinary.

Puckett should have looked closely at the Currant Creek Power Plant explanation. This image to the right shows the flight path of 434 starting at 0712Z (1212 MST). Notice that the plane flew directly over the Currant Creek power plant at roughly 07:13:30 Z. This is about the same time the aircrew stated that the bright orange square was directly below them!

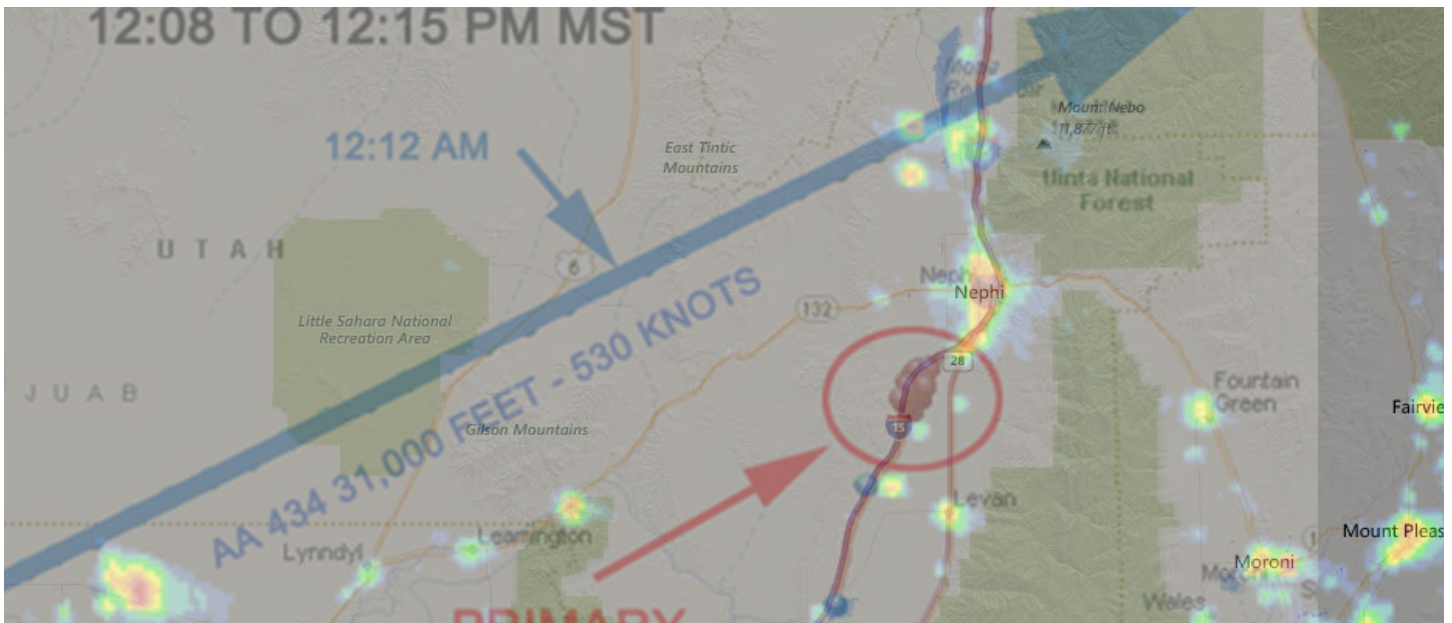




The general radius of the power plant’s coverage is about 1 mile, which matches the estimate in size by the aircrew. This photo by Zachery Jensen shows the power plant at night.⁷ Compared to the town of Mona (in the foreground), it is extremely well illuminated.



When I transposed Puckett's aircraft flightpath on top of a light pollution map for Utah ⁸, we see the aircraft flying directly over a large light source at the time it was flying over the power plant!



Conclusions

The reaction of the aircrew should be a telltale sign of how significant this UFO was to them. They simply asked what the source of the lights were in front of them. They even stated that they were passing over it but did not seem concerned about any sort of possible collision. If their light source was truly airborne, they would have expressed a great more concern in their communications and would have asked the ATC for a new course or what the identity of the aircraft was. This indicates the object was perceived by the aircrew as being on the ground. The information all indicates that the Currant Creek Power Plant is the most likely source of the mile-wide lights.

Notes and references

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2015 Canadian UFO survey released

Another year has passed and another Canadian UFO survey has been published. As always, I want to congratulate the individuals involved for publishing something that other UFO organizations appear to be afraid to do. They actually list all the sightings they collected and then classify them so the reader can see the results.

The survey for 2015 has 146 cases listed as “unknowns”. These “unknowns” are what everyone focuses their attention upon but I have to wonder if anybody even bothered to look at the data very closely.

Defining an unknown

According to the survey:

The category of Unknown is adopted if there is extensive information or data available and/or if the contributed data or case report contains enough information such that a conventional explanation cannot be satisfactorily proposed.¹

This implies that the “unknown” classification is to be applied to cases where the report indicates something exotic was seen and a thorough evaluation had been conducted. A quick review of the survey indicates that it appears that there are some “unknowns” that should not have been given this classification.

Missing data

The first thing I noticed about the unknown classifications are that certain fields are not complete. I would assume it might be a case of bad data entry but it was not just isolated cases. Almost half (69/146 by my count) of these cases do not have a duration for the event. The definition of an unknown is that the report contains enough information to eliminate a conventional explanation. One would think that “duration” would be an important bit of information in evaluating the case.

Allan Hendry once stated the following about having the proper data to make an IFO/UFO evaluation:

In my own reports, I would never have dreamed of making an IFO/UFO judgment without important parameters like shape and duration.²

It wasn't duration that was the only thing missing in some of these “unknowns”. By my count, seven did not have a time listed and one did not have a specific location given other than British Columbia. In my opinion, one has to at least consider lumping these cases into the “insufficient information” category and not the “unknown” classification. How can these reports actually be considered to have enough information to even attempt a solution? If no solution can be attempted, then they really can not be classified as “unknown”.

How reliable is reliable?

Some of the other sightings listed as “unknown” that caught my eye seemed dubious at best. Even more strange was how they managed to get high reliability ratings. Reliability is a subjective measure and I found several examples which made me question the scale being used.

This sighting report on the 22nd of May could be found in the MUFON database.

I was outside my parents place at 12:20 recording myself because I was seeing weird stuff in the sky and everything went quiet for a moment, and just not your normal quietness, anyways I saw a orb in the sky flying all directions until it took off towards the north and vanished. Then another showed up to the NE and was bobbing up and down like a yo-yo and vanished quite quickly. Suddenly no more than 5min after another craft showed up above the trees in front of me no more than 100-150ft from me with red and green lights pulsating around the object and all of a sudden the lights went out and it started to glow red in the center a bit and it just kept getting more red and as it was turning more red it was making a humming or roaring sound and it kept getting louder the more red it got. as this was happening I was walking back closer to the house and gradge and it took off with the whitest light that I have ever seen and just as it was flying over me it stoped and I know this sounds crazy and Im not religious so anyways it stoped above me and opened up and it was a Angel I saw her wings face smiling at me and her feet were crossed and in that short moment she made me understand that everything is going to be ok for us, I never felt more at peace and anyways shortly after she folded up her wings and took off. My mom was heading home from work around 2:00am in the morning and when she was coming close to Harcourt she saw weird red orb in the sky and my mother does no believe in that kind of stuff, so when I was telling my story to my mom and dad, she said she also seen something the same night. I don't think that I got anything on my cell but ill give u what ever I can to help? I took a little bit of video audio but I stopped recording shortly after I started hearing weird sounds because I stopped it and ran for the house, I wasn't really concerned about my cell at the time but when I seen the glowing object I tried to get it to record but no success. not sure may have been my own fault because I was so stunned when I seen the glowing object. Sorry I wish I could have got it!³

This was given a reliability rating of “6” out of “10”. The highest rating I saw in the database was a “7”. This means this is one of the more reliable sightings in the database. Do we really consider a sighting of an “angel” to be an actual event? I admit the possibility exists he saw something unusual but when the sighting is laced with religious overtones bordering on miraculous visions, a certain amount skepticism begins to surface. Certainly, a reliability of “6” is a tad inflated in regards to this sighting.

I really had to wonder about this October 11, 2015 sighting, which read:

Hello,

I'm EBE 868 i have been stranded on planet earth for sometime now. I'm able to use electromagnetic waves and keep my self hidden for the most part. Being able to use other humans and go from physical bodies to human bodies to keep myself going. I have been here stranded on earth since early October of 2015. I have been adopted into human life and this is how i have learned the human languages. I have tried to contact governments but have not been successful this is why we need your help in this. The disaster on Matif made us arrive here.

We tried to get away from Matif. We failed and the celestial body hit Matif.

I hope you can help us. I'm not the only one.

*Please get back it's urgent.*⁴

This was classified as "unknown" and given a reliability rating of "3". I would consider this a potential hoax or somebody, who might have psychological problems. I would have given it a much lower reliability rating and probably called it "insufficient information". The only thing that would change that evaluation would be if EBE868 could prove he actually was an alien.

Then there was a classification of "7" reliability for this November 5th sighting:

*March 2012 - to present day, i have had over 100 ufo sightings. around 1/4 have been extremely close encounters. 7-10 close sightings had multiple witnesses, my last encounter/abduction that i last remember was November 5th 2015 , well at 1st i didn't remember anything, i woke up and knew instantly something had occurred, found a few scratches but couldn't find anything that strange to know foresure. later in the afternoon i looked at the pictures on my cell phone and my memory of the encounter came back as i looked at each picture for the 1st time.*⁵

The photographs attached to the report were simply out of focus images that could be photographs of anything. Can this be considered one of the most reliable reports from 2015? Did out of focus and blurry images really make this a convincing report?

The whole "reliability rating" has me wondering about the scale being used. With EBE 868 getting a rating of "3", I wondered if there were any reports rated lower than this. There were eight reports with a "2" rating but none had a rating of "1". Two of these reports were part of a known hoax regarding a UFO that supposedly crashed into Lake Winnipeg. If it is a known hoax, why wasn't it rated as a "1" for reliability? The other "2" ratings were all given "Insufficient information" classifications. If they are "insufficient information", doesn't that mean they should be rated with the lowest value possible?

Trying to understand the rating system better, I contacted Chris Rutkowski about the scale being used. According to him, the reliability is a measure of the report's quality. The scale starts with the reports with least information being graded with a low reliability and the well investigated and informative cases having the highest reliability. While I agree with the approach, it is my observation that the scale is not being used uniformly. This is because the graders do not have standards of what each level of reliability is. What might be a "7" for one individual could be considered a "5" for another. Additionally, it is possible that an individual's scale can change over the years. What was a "5" a few years earlier to one individual might now be a "4" or "6". The key is to develop a standard that everyone can follow to prevent personal bias from affecting the rating.

In my opinion, the level of reliability should be focused on how much quantifiable information can be found in the report so it can be evaluated properly and how many independent reports confirm the event did happen. As more quantifiable information is presented and more reports of the event are filed, the more reliable the report becomes. This is an example of how such a system might work:

Reliability rating	Values for UFO reports	Values for Close Encounter cases
1	Single witness report of event. Minimal information presented. Some standard information missing from report. Photographs/video but they are unclear as to what they show because of focus, unstable camera, or lack of reference points.	Single witness making claim of CE
2	Single report but others involved in witnessing the event. Minimal information presented.	Multiple witness claim of CE
3	Multiple reports from same event. Minimal information found in reports.	Witness claim with independent verification by another witness that UFO was present in area.
4	Single or multiple report(s) that is (are) complete. Description includes general directions for beginning and end of sighting. Photographs/video that are in focus and show an object with reference points.	Claims of biological/physical evidence but no verification.

5	Single or multiple report(s) that include general directions and general locations of elevation in the sky. Photographs/videos that show an object of distinct size/shape.	Qualified medical personnel confirm biological effects.
6	Single report that gives specific directions and specific locations of elevation in the sky.	Photographic/Video evidence that supports claims.
7	Multiple reports that give specific directions and general locations of elevation in the sky.	Physical evidence confirmed by qualified individuals
8	Multiple reports that give specific directions and specific angles of elevation in the sky.	Physical/medical evidence confirmed to be unusual in nature.
9	Multiple reports that include angular sizes and speeds. Photographs/videos that support the report and show some form of object with details.	Physical/medical evidence confirmed to be alien in nature.

This list is just a suggestion but it uses a graduated scale that makes the report more and more reliable as certain standards are met. A single witness case can be considered reliable but only to a point. Eventually, there needs to be some sort of confirmation to increase that reliability. Getting to a rating of 9 requires multiple witnesses, who provide information that can be quantified and be used to compute the object's location, altitude, and speed. Looking at the scale above, I would state that most of the reports in the Canadian UFO survey would fall in the 1-5 category.

Despite the present ability of people to hoax photographs and videos, I decided to include them in the UFO report scale. Most photographs in these databases are taken by honest people. However, the potential for hoax exists, especially when the photographs appear to contain some form of exotic craft or there are inconsistencies in the images compared to the report given.

The problem with assigning reliability ratings is that a majority of the people filing the reports are not very good at articulating their observations in a way that can be properly evaluated. It is my opinion that the survey has accepted this poor data as the norm and substandard reports are being given average ratings. This inflation of reliability ratings can produce questionable results.

Two for one

Something else I noticed in the database is that there appear to be duplicate entries. This probably happened when the same witness decided to make the same report in two different forums. For instance, this one had me puzzled⁶:

2015	10	24	2030	Winnipeg	ME	nl	1200	red	1	ps	5	5 MUFON	u	a succession of about 100 red lights moving across sky
2015	10	24		Winnipeg	ME	nl		red	1	ps	5	5 Internet	p	16 red lights in sky disappearing and reappearing

They appear to be describing the same event but one was listed as "probable" and the other was listed as "unknown". Was it because the MUFON report had a 100 lights and the Internet report only listed 16? To me, they sound a lot like Chinese lanterns but that is just a guess based on the description alone.

Another example are these reports⁷:

2015	2	15	230	Sainte-Brigitte de Laval	PQ	c4	orange	1	ps	7	7 NUFORC	I	orange light appeared in room along with 4 short aliens surrounding bed, person heard high pitched noise in head, then awoke next morning, snow in yard was a foot lower.	
2015	2	15	230	Sainte-Brigitte de Laval	PQ	c3			1		8	4 AQU	u	3 humanoid, 4 feet tall, too large head for frail bodies, big black slanted eyes, no eyelids, yellow-red lights. Heard high pitched hum, then, it's next morning

Again, we have two separate cases made by, what appears to be, the same individual through two different sources. The reliability of the report varied between 4 and 7 and the classification was "Insufficient information" versus "unknown". Did the removal of the fourth alien and calling them "humanoids" change the evaluation of the case?

Similar classification problems appeared in the May 29th "unknown" at Salaberry-de-Valleyfield. Again, a probable rating was given to one report while an "unknown" appeared in a similar report two lines down (which had no time listed)⁸. The reports came from different sources but seem to be the same individual making the report.

At least the August 22 Levis sightings had the same source and got the same classification⁹.

2015	8	22	2100	Levis	PQ	nl	red	2	ps	6	6 AQU	u	red-orange lights forming a triangle moving in the sky	
2015	8	22	2100	Levis	PQ	nl	orange		2	ps	6	6 AQU	u	7 orange lights at different heights like helicopters but not blinking

These reports may have even been made by the same individual or two individuals viewing the same event. Does this mean that the reports should be lumped together as observations of one UFO event and not two?

The problem with using multiple sources for data introduces the possibility that the same report will be listed twice and, once again, result in flawed statistics. The fact that some of these apparent duplicate entries are receiving different classifications makes one question the standards being used to evaluate them.

How much investigation?

The survey makes it clear that some, if not a majority, of the cases were never really investigated beyond evaluating the report found in the databases. Even the “most reliable/interesting” cases of 2015 apparently were not well investigated. One of the cases was explained in SUNlite 7-2 and I have to wonder about some of the others.

A mass sighting?

There were ten cases that the survey singled out as being the most interesting. Many were single witness cases but others seemed to include multiple witnesses, which might result in something meaningful being extracted from the report. Unfortunately, just because the report states there was more than one witness does not mean that this helped in evaluating the report’s reliability. One such case came from the NUFORC database and involved a large group of people seeing an enormous craft hovering over a metropolitan area:

This is the first time I have ever seen something like this. I live above a hotel niteclub and the noise keeps me awake til the early AM hours. I heard a bunch of people outside the bar at closing making a rackett after leaving the bar. They were shouting ohs and ahs and look look look very excitedly. I looked to where they were pointing and saw above the tall building across the street a brightly lit triangle. Now this is the same area of the sky that the planes travel for landing at the local airport, so at first I thought it was a very low and slow plane heading for the airport. But the craft was going too slow and too low. I guess it was only 500 feet above ground elevation. A RCMP police car pulled up as the people were standing in the street disrupting traffick, so there maybe a police report to this incident. But anyway, the vehicle seemed to notice the commotion below and stopped dead. It stayed stopped for about 2 minutes, I guess, as I was so awestruck I lost track of the time.

The craft was large.. I guess about more than 200 feet long from point to wide end of the triangle. But I could not see the whole thing as the back end was blocked by the highrise building across the street. I could only guess as I only saw the whole thing when it took off later. It brightened to twice the illumination as it stopped as it seemed to be aware of the people below and the flashing RCM Police car lights.. At this point in time two more police cars arrived with their sirens and lights flashing and when this happened the craft’s lights went out and it took off towards the airport very fast but without any noise at all! There were about 50 people in the street in various levels of intoxication myself and my friend and three police witnessing this sight.¹⁰

This sighting had a reliability rating of “7”, which probably has a lot to do with the claims made in the report. Despite rating it a high quality sighting, there is little in the way of details. We do not even know which direction the witness was facing. More importantly, it is a report by one individual. With so many people and the local police involved, one would think that there would be more information/reports. A check of the Kamloops news media archives revealed no information about this incident despite the police being involved and there are no other reports in the NUFORC or MUFON database.

I asked Chris Rutkowski if he had more information. He responded that the RCMP confirmed that they were present that morning but there were no details. He also implied that there may be more reports from the 50 witnesses but they did not appear in any database or the survey. Without more details it is hard to accept this case’s “high reliability” because of a single report and the RCMP admitting that they were at the scene of a large gathering of people near a bar at 3AM.

A star or planet photograph?

Another “7” reliability sighting was on October 11th. It only involves one witness but they managed to take photographs to support their claim. The MUFON report of this even reads:

At & about Sunrise on 11th & 12th of Oct 2015 , a radiating “object” in the shape of a large diamond has appeared , colour as witnessed was in gold tone , photographic evidence (12 in total but only 3 close-ups are attached in this report) shows different rotating-changing shapes in all kinds of hues , from white to pink to green to near metallic to blue & so forth . Sighting in Toronto Canada , all info is included within the pictures as is my copyright included as well .

btw , I have been in some contact with Andre Morin the Director of MUFON Canada

I’m willing to forward to you all of the rest pictures of this particular sighting/s but only through email submission , not on public form . Peace .¹¹

The photographs attached to the report were taken with a Kodak Easyshare M1063 camera, which is a simple point and shoot. Exposure times ranged from 1/2 second to 2 seconds. Again, we have a highly reliable report that lacks any real details that can be evaluated. Missing are basic directions of observation and estimated position in the sky.

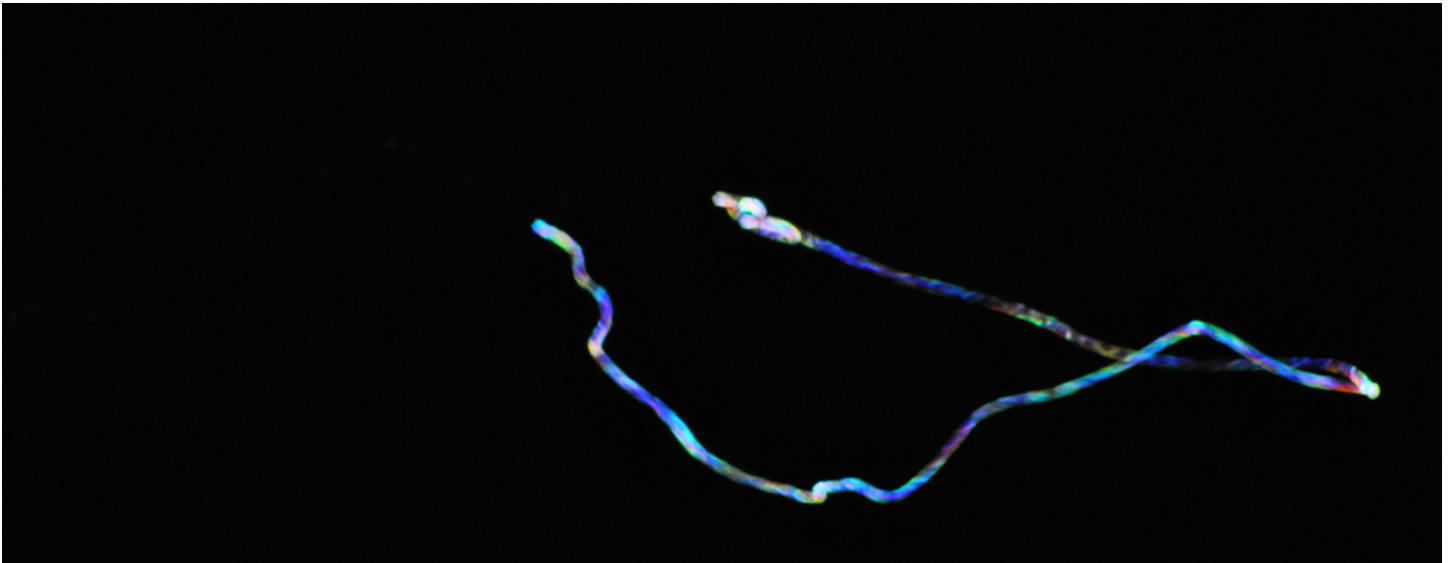
The fact that the witness saw the event on two successive mornings (not the one listed in the survey) should ring alarm bells that it may have a potential astronomical observation. Besides many bright winter sky stars being visible that morning, the planet’s Jupiter, Venus, and Mars were all close together in the east. Because the witness stated that it was about sunrise, I suspect his object might be Venus but it is difficult to say. The photographs really do not help resolve the case. They show some sort of point source that is out of focus and not stationary.

Hand holding an inexpensive point and shoot camera with a slow shutter speed is going to introduce apparent motion when the actual object is stationary. I tried to duplicate the effort using my smart phone (LG G4) and the star Capella (left image). I set the



exposure time to 2 seconds (in manual mode) and I used the zoom feature (image on left). I did nothing more than crop the image with no enhancement.

Another photograph I imaged involved a two second exposure of the star Sirius using a digital SLR with a 300mm telephoto lens. The resultant multicolored trail illustrates how much the star was scintillating during the two second exposure.



These images appear similar to the image submitted by the witness and lead me to believe that it is possible that the source might be astronomical and the operator of the camera created the motion seen in the images. Without more information, it is difficult to say.

The solution was there but...

On the first page of the Survey's data table, we see two cases on the morning of January 10, 2015.¹² A year ago, I had worked with Ted Molczan to identify these reports as a venting second stage following the launch of a Falcon rocket earlier that morning at 0947 UTC. This was published in SUNlite 7-2¹³ and the track of the second stage across the sky was a reasonable match to what the observers reported. One of the sightings even had a video that looked a lot like a venting rocket stage. I was surprised to see the "U" label and a "6" value for strangeness on the two reports that I thought had been identified.

If those examining the report thought it was impossible for the sighting to have been visible from Elfros, SK, they are mistaken. Molczan computed an ephemeris which made the object visible in the Southeast and moving towards the East peaking at a generous elevation angle of about 12 degrees before decreasing in elevation as it moved towards the east. It is interesting to point out that witness gave a description of their UFO passing into the tree-line in the east as the sighting progressed.

It is peculiar that there is another entry on the list from Gimli, Manitoba only a few minutes after these two sightings. It also gave a description of a venting rocket stage but was listed as "probable". Why was this case listed as "probable" when the others were rated as "unknown" even though the events appear related?

As a small nitpick, several of these sightings were listed as "daylight discs". Sunrise in early January for Manitoba and Saskatchewan is after 8 AM. These objects would have been seen in darkness/ early twilight and not daylight.

This brings us to another one of 2015's "most interesting" Canadian UFO sightings being visible from Lumsden, SK. The description sounds a lot like the venting rocket stage but the time was listed as 1300.

January 10, 2015 1:00 pm Lumsden, SK

Multiple aircraft reported a very large object with a small white light in the middle, surrounded by a halo, moving northbound in the vicinity of Lumsden, SK. One pilot reported the object appeared to descend from above FL410. The sighting lasted one to two minutes.¹⁴

One would think that the time would eliminate the Falcon 9 rocket as the source of the sighting. However, I suspected there might be a mistake in the time listed in the UFO survey. The source in the listing states "TC" or "Transport Canada", which meant these reports came from airplanes in flight. Since airplanes are in different time zones, it would not be unusual for the times to be all listed in GMT/UTC/Zulu. If one converts 1300UTC to CST, the time is 0700, which is the time of the Falcon 9 venting event being visible! The fact that airliners saw this event at 0700 CST, and not 1300 CST, appeared to be confirmed by a comment by a pilot about the Elfros sighting at the UFO Stalker website¹⁵. He had remarked that a United Air Lines flight had seen it as well.

Chris Rutkowski provided me with a link to the source of the report¹⁶. In the e-mail exchange, he admitted that the original time of 1300 CST was incorrect and that it was Zulu time, as I had suspected. The report itself is not very informative but the general description indicates that this was, very likely, another observation of the Falcon 9 second stage venting!

The screenshot shows the Transport Canada CADORS (Canadian Air Disaster Occurrence Reporting System) report for a sighting. The report is titled "Record # 1" and includes the following information:

- CADORS Number:** 2015C0109
- Occurrence Category(ies):** Other
- Occurrence Information:**
 - Occurrence Type:** Incident
 - Occurrence Date:** 2015-01-10
 - Occurrence Time:** 1300 Z
 - Day Or Night:** night-time
 - Fatalities:** 0
 - Injuries:** 0
 - Canadian Aerodrome ID:**
 - Aerodrome Name:**
 - Occurrence Location:** In the vicinity of: LUMSDEN (COLHOUN) SK (CKH8)
 - Province:** Saskatchewan
 - TC Region:** Prairie and Northern Region
 - Country:** Canada
 - World Area:** North America
 - Reported By:** NAV CANADA
 - AOR Number:** 183101-V1
- TSB Class of Investigation:**
- TSB Occurrence No:**
- Occurrence Event Information:**
 - Weather balloon, meteor, rocket, CIRVIS/UFO
- Aircraft Information:**
- Occurrence Summary:**
 - Date Entered:** 2015-02-02
 - Narrative:** Multiple aircraft reported a very large object with a small white light in the middle, surrounded by a halo, moving northbound in the vicinity of Lumsden, SK. One pilot reported the object appeared to descend from above FL410. The sighting lasted one to two minutes. No impact on operations. Communication Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings (CIRVIS) report filed.
 - O.P.I.:**
 - Further Action Required:** No

Please note that for the most part, CADORS reports contain preliminary, unconfirmed data which can be subject to change.

After our e-mail exchange, Chris implied that he was going to correct the "unknowns" associated with this event. One small step at a time.

Is this the best UFOlogy has to offer?

Is the Canadian UFO survey just another collection of UFO stories or is it a serious effort to help resolve the UFO mystery? Every year the report is released and UFOlogist heap praise on the effort and some media outlets fawn over the information. While I like to praise the report's effort, I notice that it is the same old exercise being repeated over and over proving something we already know: People report events they see in the sky that they perceive as exotic objects.

The only measurable results from the survey are the statistics that can be extracted from these reports. However, Alan Hendry once noted:

*Do UFO statistics represent a valid pursuit for more knowledge about this elusive phenomenon, or do they merely reflect frustration that none of the individual reports are capable of standing on their own two feet? Are UFO statistics a bold first step....or a desperate last resort?*¹⁷

While statistics are nice to see, I have to wonder if these are really adding to what is already known about UFOs. How do these statistics differ from those found in Blue Book records or other UFO datasets? It has been close to forty years since Hendry made this comment and we still see UFOlogists trying to present these same statistics as something significant.

While the Canadian UFO survey is an honest effort to do something with the UFO data, it really isn't enough. There needs to be a next step for the study of UFOs other than simply collecting UFO stories the same way people collect stamps or coins. Will that next step be forward or sideways?

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June 23, 1958 England AFB LA

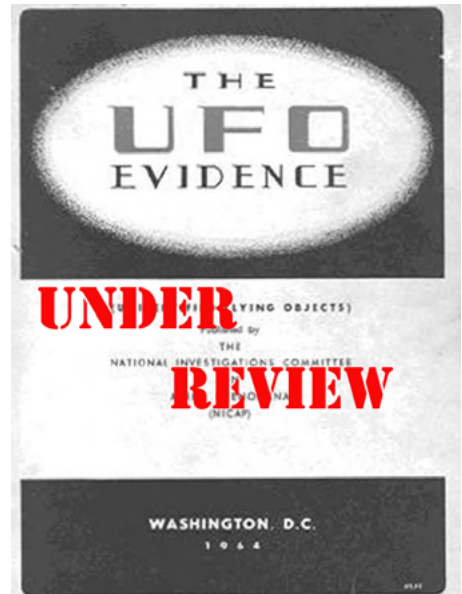
NICAP describes the event as:

June 23, 1958--Nr. England AFB, Louisiana. State policeman photographed two round UFOs. [VIII]¹

This photograph was described in section VIII:

41. England AFB, La.--State Police case. Polaroid pictures taken by a state policeman at 12:20 p.m. were published by the Alexandria Daily Town Talk. The officer stated he saw "two glowing balls" in the sky and that it "scared hell out of me." He was not sure whether it was one double object, or two separate ones close together. The Air Force later stated the "UFO" was a reflection off the windshield of the patrol car. NICAP letters to the state police were not answered.²

However, there was no copy of the photograph for readers to view. It seems that, despite the photographs being published in the local media, NICAP never seems to have examined them. The UFO evidence simply gives the analysis of "incomplete" because there was not enough information. How can something be considered "evidence" if it is "incomplete"?



The Blue Book investigation

When one examines the Blue Book record, one quickly discovers that NICAP omitted some critical points.³

- There was another trooper in the vehicle with him
- The photographs were taken through the windshield
- The photographer did not see the object unless he was looking through the viewfinder of the camera.

The photographs are in the files but they are not that impressive. To me, they look like reflections in the windshield. Blue Book determined that it probably was light leaking through the camera bellows. In either case, the image is not that impressive.

Explained?

We can't call this definitively explained but the photographs do not appear to show a physical object. The photographs are suspect simply because the second trooper did not see anything even though the event lasted for at least 30 seconds. It is stated he was looking in the wrong direction but one has to wonder why the trooper would not notice the object in front of him!

I also noticed that the two photographs^{4&5}, which are only separated by 30 seconds, show cloud formations that indicate that a more



significant time frame may have elapsed between photographs. It makes one question the estimate of 30 seconds and why the other trooper was unaware of the event.

The fact that the photographer only saw the object through the viewfinder and he photographed through the car's windshield makes one suspect this is a reflection of some kind. There is no reason to suspect this photograph is evidence of UFOs being some form of advanced technology not from this earth. It is not good evidence and never should have been listed as such.

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701 CLUB: CASE 1250: JUNE 2, 1952 -FULDA, GERMANY



Don Berliner's list states the following:

June 2, 1952; Fulda, West Germany. Time unknown. Witness: 1st Lt. John Hendry, photo-navigator on an RB-26C reconnaissance bomber. One porcelain-white object flew very fast for an unknown length of time.¹

Brad Sparks describes it the same way.² This is all the proponents state about the case. What does the Blue Book file give us?

The Blue Book file

There is little investigation made by Blue Book on this case. There is just one sheet with an attached map of where the encounter took place. Details about the case give us the following information³:

1. The RB-26C was on a photo-Recon mission near Fulda, which was close to the East German border.
2. The RB-26C was at 12,500 feet and flying in a South-southwest direction (200 degrees).
3. The UFO was seen traveling in the opposite direction towards the North-northeast (15 degrees).
4. The UFO was estimated at an altitude of 7000 feet.
5. The UFO was moving at a high rate of speed. It was estimated as the same speed as an F94 making a head on pass.
6. The object was spherical in nature and the color of white porcelain.
7. The object was estimated at a size of 6-8 feet.
8. The plane could not take a picture because it happened so suddenly.
9. There was no vapor trail.
10. Temperature was -5C at the plane's altitude
11. Winds were from the West-southwest (240 degrees) at 40 knots.

Speculation based on the report

It seems the only person, who saw the UFO was the Photo-Navigator, who was probably in the nose of the aircraft. The plane's cruise speed is 250 MPH. Depending on what the plane was practicing, its speed may have been a bit higher.

If the object was at the distance described and the size indicated it would have had an approximate angular size of about 5' of arc (about 1/6th the size of the moon) at close approach. Such an angular size would be a small object where details would be hard to see.



Because the object was moving in the opposite direction of the plane, one has to consider the possibility that the motion of the aircraft was what produced the apparent speed and the UFO was possibly moving at a slower speed or stationary. If this were the case, the possibility that it was a balloon has to be considered. All of the estimates are nothing more than that. The object could have been smaller and closer to the plane. A rapidly moving plane that makes a close pass of a balloon is going to give the impression of an object moving rapidly in the opposite direction.

Solved?

The most probable solution here is that what was seen was a balloon. Its apparent speed was a combination of the aircraft's motion and the balloon being blown in almost the opposite direction by the wind. Other than a weather balloon, another possible source of this balloon was the "Winds of freedom" campaign.⁴ This was an effort to drop leaflets behind the iron curtain using large numbers of balloons. Thousands of balloons were released between 1951 and about 1956. Since the plane was near the East German border, it would not be a surprise the balloon was part of that effort. This case should be reclassified as "possible balloon".

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook unknowns". NICAP. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
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3. "Air Intelligence Information Report dtd 10 June 1952". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9615169>
4. Cummings, Richard H. "Operation "Winds of Freedom" and Ballooncasting: Balloons, Leaflets, and Radio Broadcasts". Cold War Radio Vignettes. August 7, 2012. Available WWW: <http://coldwarradios.blogspot.com/2012/08/winds-of-freedom-and-ballooncasting.html>