

SUNlite

Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

The first principle is that you must not fool yourself – and you are the easiest person to fool.

Richard Feynman

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Cover: A Falcon rocket launch from Cape Canaveral seen from Saint Augustine, Florida. It would have been spectacular had it been a night launch. Because it was a day launch people seemed to be oblivious to it. There were no UFO reports associated with the launch but, as I have noted in the past, rocket launches can produce UFO reports.

Below: The solar eclipse produced a good number of UFO photographs that were submitted to MUFON. Most of these UFOs were nothing more than internal reflections. The eclipse produced no unusual UFO reports



Abandon ship?

It appears that MUFON has gone too far with their recent symposium. In addition to the recent Robert Ventre dust up, several prominent individuals in MUFON are abandoning the organization because of the content and speakers promoted by the MUFON leadership. It seems that the leadership wants their membership to experience “Hanger One” type presentations in order to keep them engaged. Those wanting a more “grounded” approach towards UFO research are being ignored. It is my observation that the leadership is willing to accept the defections of a few high profile names in favor of encouraging many more individuals, who want to be entertained with these exaggerated, and highly suspect, stories. This kind of approach results in a financial gain, which means MUFON is a business and not a scientific organization. In order to keep the membership numbers up, MUFON will have to elevate the sensationalism in their presentations in order to keep the membership entertained. Eventually, the stories will become so bizarre and outlandish that MUFON will lose what little credibility it had to begin with. Only time will tell what damage will be done.

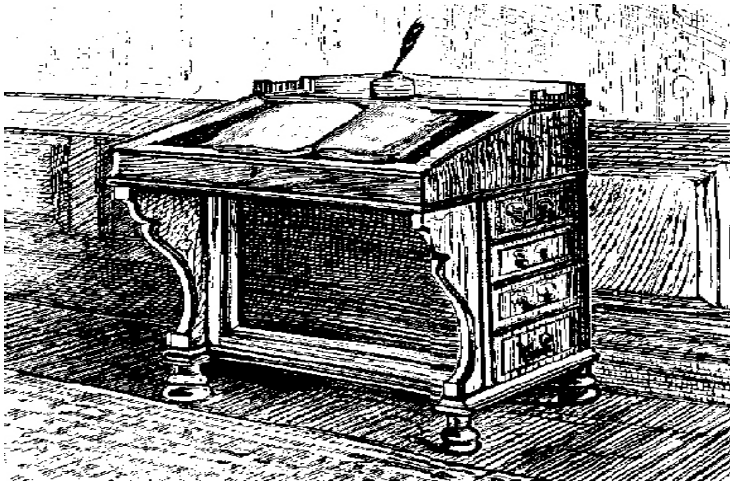
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The solar eclipse came and went and there really was no great influx of UFO reports. Peter Davenport states that he had only 20 reports on August 21. MUFON had quite a few reports but almost all involved lens reflections found in solar eclipse photographs. There were no visual sightings that were backed up by photographs. This seems to indicate that people were focused on the eclipse more than they were on other events in the sky. In my article on the subject, I drew the assumption that, like the 1991 eclipse, people would be looking at the sky surrounding the sun and noting anything they thought was unusual. The short duration of this total eclipse (2 minutes 40 seconds) may have prevented them from doing so and people focused their attention on the eclipsed sun itself. During the 1991 eclipse (which lasted almost 7 minutes), I remember taking the time to note various astronomical objects, including Orion’s belt. During this eclipse, I had only enough time to observe the twilight glow around the horizon and notice that the planet Venus was visible. I look forward to 2024, when we are to have over four minutes of totality and I will have more time to check out the sky.

I apologize for the minimal content in this issue. I just did not have a lot of time to devote to writing about UFOs.

Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



IPACO released a report that addressed the Aquadilla UFO video (mentioned in SUNlite 7-6, 8-2, 8-4, and 8-5). The author, Rubén Lianza, is a retired military pilot and is a member of Argentina's CEFAE (Not to be confused with Chile's CEFAA). Lianza pretty much mirrors the argument made in SUNlite 7-6 but he added a twist as to the source of the object. He suggested that it was two heart-shaped Chinese lanterns tied together. He also suggested they were launched from a nearby beach, where weddings are often held with Chinese lanterns being part of the ceremony. This is an interesting hypothesis but I am not sure if the object(s) are Chinese lanterns. Based on my experience in launching them, getting two of them to launch together and have an equal time of being aloft would be difficult. What is important is that this is another individual who, after examining the video, determined the object was a wind propelled device and not the "unknown aerial and submerged nautical object exhibiting advanced technology"

championed by the SCU. Speaking of the SCU, they responded to Lianza's hypothesis with the usual bluster so prominently employed when "debunkers" question anything they have written. Lianza would respond with his own rebuttal of their rebuttal. It is interesting that Powell had time to respond to this theory but still has yet to release that updated report, which was promised to be completed in February 2016. I suspect that there never will be an updated report. The last thing the SCU wants to admit is that their "peer review" failed to discover some obvious mistakes. It appears that the only "peer review" was a review by the SCU itself. This is why Feynman stated that one has to beware of being fooled by yourself. It seems likely that the SCU's beliefs blinded them from seeing the obvious.

Curt Collins revealed a new blog with the title of "The saucers that time forgot". His posting about the September 3, 1952 Tucson UFO being a "Moby Dick" balloon was very interesting. Readers of this issue will notice that another research balloon launched from Holloman AFB was probably responsible for a classic UFO case promoted by UFO enthusiasts. Keep an eye on Curt's blog for many more cases that got missed by UFO promoters and Blue Book.

The revelations of Jaimie Maussan's scientists was published in July. In that presentation, the story behind the mummies was revealed. It is important to point out that the mummies did not come from archaeologists but, instead, were provided by tomb robbers. Therefore, the provenance of these mummies is not established. At one point, Dr. Zalce declared that these mummies were not human and were reptilian in nature because one had "eggs" in the abdomen and they all appeared to have "retractable necks". Despite these proclamations, the DNA report by Stephen Fratpietro states the DNA is 99-100% homo sapiens (human). The Radio carbon dating was inconclusive but the bulk of the data seems to indicate a range of 300-1000 AD. Peruvian archaeologists proclaimed that this is all a farce and suggested that the mummies had been modified. Considering the fact that there is a lack of provenance, they have a valid point.

John Perry outlined his analysis of the mummies on Youtube and mirrored the conclusions reached by people like Mick West. They all suspect that the mummies have been modified. Perry was so sure of this that he stated he would give everything he had to archaeological research in Peru, if the academy of sciences bought into the claims of Maussan's team of "experts". Perry does not have to worry. Like the Roswell slides, Maussan's group of "scientists" fear publishing their reports in an actual peer reviewed journal outside of their control. They could never publish their claims because their fellow experts would point out all the flaws in their analysis. As a result, they continue to peddle their "arguments from authority" to those who "want to believe" them. It makes them look important and they continue to collect a paycheck from Maussan.

Even the Atlantic jumped into the fray and noted that Maussan, or those controlling the mummies, have refused to allow Peruvian archaeologists to examine them. Elsa Tomasto-Cagigao, a respected Peruvian bio-anthropologist, agreed to debate Maussan and Dr. Zalce in mid-July. The article does not say if there ever was, or will be, a live debate. Tomasto-Cagigao seemed to think this was all a fake and Maussan, and his scientific henchmen, are guilty of grave robbing and altering the bodies to make them appear alien. This is another UFOlogical black eye but Maussan will still get paid to appear at UFO conferences and promote this kind of nonsense.

James Clarkson revealed that Robert Powell has left MUFON as science director because of the speakers involved in the recent MUFON symposium. He also indicated that Jan Harzan appears to be only interested in money. According to Clarkson, Harzan appeared to be only interested in how much money the various state organizations could donate to MUFON HQ. As I continue to point out, MUFON is all about money and not about science.

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

Cheryl Costa states that she has determined that UFOs involve off-worlders based on confirmation through all these UFO reports being submitted by observers, who state they saw something extraordinary. Missing in her writings is the fact that a large majority of these "extraordinary" sightings can be explained. Recall that all she has done is collect raw reports with no interest in determining if any have solutions. Costa is living in, as G.K. Chesterson stated, "The clean well-lit prison of one idea". In the bottom of her blog entry she lists five recent UFO sightings. While four of these are hard to resolve without further investigation, one is not. The American Meteor Society database lists a bright fireball being visible at 2201 PM EDT on the 13th being visible from Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Carolinas. The Oak Ridge sighting was probably caused by that bright fireball. Like so many UFO aficionados, Costa is only interested in promoting UFO reports as something mysterious, instead of solving them.

API (Aerial Phenomenon Investigations) director Paul Carr wrote a rather interesting article about the MUFON database. While he specifically addresses MUFON's data, Carr's conclusions can easily apply to just about any UFO data collection center. He concludes that most of the reports were inaccurate, incomplete, and inadequately screened. For skeptics, this is nothing new and reflects most of what I have been saying in SUNlite for years. I wonder if Cheryl Costa read this piece since her statistics (and book) are based on these raw reports.

The Eden Project has been circulating "UFO videos" that look a lot like swarming birds. Scott Brando states they are fakes and part of a publicity campaign to promote the Eden Project's tourist attraction.

An interesting "orb video" appeared on the Coast-to-Coast AM web site. The photographic equipment shown in the video looked impressive but the video of the "orb" was not. It was another one of those image intensifier videos, which make bright stars, planes, and satellites look larger (and brighter) than they really are. The MUFON report states that they were north of the peak "Stawamus Chief" and the event happened at 10:59PM local. Luckily, Scott Brando, who heads the blog UFO of interest, looked into this and discovered that the International Space Station appeared in the sky to the south of this location at the time indicated. According to "Heaven's above", it was visible from 22:53-22:59 and was magnitude -3.1. Since the UFO hunters did not mention seeing the ISS, it seems likely that their "orb" was probably the ISS! Rob Freeman, one of the observers, and a MUFON investigator, disputed this explanation. He stated that the orb lit up the trees, which means it was in the trees. Apparently, Freeman is unaware of how an image intensifier works and that bright objects in the sky can illuminate the ground. The illumination of the trees is due to the ISS passing behind them and not passing through them. Mr. Freeman declared that the video was now in the hands of "accredited scientists" to be studied. When Brando asked who these individuals were, Freeman went silent. One can only assume that these "scientists" are some of MUFON's best and brightest. We saw how smart the "best and brightest" were on the program "Hanger one". Classify this as probably the ISS unless Freeman can provide more details regarding his video that prove otherwise.

Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos' blog entry drew plenty of criticism from usual places. Those that have an interest in promoting their own research on UFOs appeared to reject anything he had to say on the matter. Some continue to believe in the UFO conspiracy and proclaim that the real proof is found in top secret files that never will be accessed. Others proclaim the existing Blue Book files contain "shocking" information about UFOs. While I have not read every document in the Blue Book files, I have read quite a few and have closely examined many of the 701 "unknown" cases, as well as others. I have yet to find anything "shocking" in these documents and nobody has ever published anything that convinces me that these files contain evidence that supports the theory that UFOs represent an alien intelligence or some "exotic" phenomenon that is unknown to science. This was Vicente-Juan's point. If there is evidence there, or anywhere else, it would have surfaced by now. I find it amusing that those who are making such proclamations about convincing evidence have never presented such proof in publications where it will be critically evaluated. It is easy to publish in the MUFON journal but how hard is it to get a paper on UFO cases published in a publication dedicated to scientifically evaluating evidence? Even the infamous "Scientific Coalition for UFOlogy" (SCU) appears to be afraid to publish their paper on the Aquadilla video in a publication dedicated to Infrared technology/research. Either they tried and were rejected OR they do not want to publish because they do not want it known that their conclusions are suspect/wrong.

The Roswell Corner

Roswell was a nuclear nightmare?

Somebody tried to explain Roswell by involving Blue Book's former head, Major Robert Friend. According to the article, Friend stated that he thought the incident involved an unarmed nuclear device. This is all speculation by Friend and ignores the fact that there is no documentation to support it. In the case of the 11 April 1950 B-29 crash at Manzano base near Albuquerque, NM, there was plenty of documentation. If Roswell involved a nuclear device, of any kind, it would have been well documented and there would have been a paper trail. The 1994 Roswell report mentioned they had looked into this and found nothing. To see what was found, all we have to is read how Mack Brazel described the debris field. Rubber, tin foil and sticks do not make a nuclear weapon or a flying saucer. That description does match what was seen in the Fort Worth photographs. What you see is what you get. This evidence indicates what was found was balloon materials and radar reflectors.

More of the same old nonsense

As I pointed out in last issue, Tony Bragalia is trying to resurrect his failed UFOlogical career with the hope that people will forget his participation in the Roswell Slides fiasco. Readers will recall that Bragalia invented some exotic stories about the Ray's and how they were "insiders", who would be allowed to view an alien body. He also tried to portray the Roswell Slides Research Group as liars who had manipulated the slide to create the deblurring of the plaque. His distortion of the truth goes much further than the Roswell slides fiasco and populates a great deal of his writings. The same can be said for his latest interpretations of what public figures stated concerning Roswell. His recent article regarding Dana Perino takes quotes that are nothing more than speculation and then twists them into "Bragalia Facts", which are similar to the "alternative facts" that have been making headlines over the past year.

ANOTHER BALLOON SIGHTING

On August 17, I was in Maryville, Tennessee visiting family and getting ready for the eclipse. That evening, while waiting for the stars to appear, I noticed another new "star" visible in the sky. Examination with binoculars indicated it was not a star but some sort of extended object. I quickly brought out my cameras and took many photographs of the object before it began to fade. Over a period of 30 minutes, the object slowly drifted SSW and grew fainter. Its initial magnitude was about -1 but faded to +3 as the sun got further below the horizon.

Since I was in a new location, I was not exactly familiar with true north at the time of the sighting. Polaris was behind the house and not visible at the beginning of the sighting. I estimated it was first visible at an azimuth of about 190 degrees and elevation 40 degrees. It was last seen about an azimuth of 200 degrees and 30 degrees elevation. It took about 30 minutes to move that distance.

The photographs were taken with an 800MM F10 lens and showed an interesting object that, at first glance, looks like a "flying saucer". Looking at the photographs of the sun I took with the same configuration, I estimate the angular size to be roughly 2 minutes of arc. Examining the image closely leads me to conclude that this was probably a balloon reflecting the sun and drifting with upper level winds. The altitude appears to have been roughly 18-20km based on the radiosonde data from balloons launched at 0000Z on 18 August from Greensboro, NC and Peachtree, GA. While most of the winds were towards the East and Southeast, when the balloons ascended into this region, winds were recorded as coming from the North-northeast. Nashville's balloon from this time period did not have any data above 17 km.

While I could not positively identify the source, there were several locations in the region planning on launching balloons for the eclipse and I suspect that this was a test flight for one of these balloons.



SEPTEMBER 23, 1951 AND JULY 23, 1951 MARCH AFB

The chronology describes this case as:

September 23, 1951--Nr. March AFB, Calif. F-86 jets circled below an unidentified object, unable to reach its altitude. [III]¹

Section III gives a brief description:

Attempted to intercept UFO in apparent orbit at 50,000 feet.²

The footnote for this refers to "From USAF intelligence report. (See also Ruppelt, Edward J., *op.cit.*, p. 131)³

A repeat incident?

It is interesting to note that, according to The Best Evidence, this is not the first time March AFB had such an incident. The chronology lists another event exactly two months prior to this:

July 23, 1951--March Field, Calif. Radar-visual sighting of silvery object circling high above aircraft. [VIII]⁴

Section VIII states:

UFO tracked on radar, pilots saw silvery object circling above them. 50,000 feet.⁵

The source is, once again, USAF intelligence reports and the book, *Flying saucers from outer space* (1953) by Donald Keyhoe. The Blue Book files make no mention of such a case on July 23rd. The applicable section of Keyhoe's book is in chapter 3, which reads:

Then, slowly, sightings began to increase. One new and important report came from the guided-missile tracking base near White Sands, New Mexico. On the morning of July 14, two radar operators caught a fast-moving object on their scope. At the same time a tracker watching a B-29 with binoculars saw a large UFO near the bomber. Another observer quickly lined it up with his 35-mm. camera, then shot 200 feet of film. Because of the high altitude, the saucer showed only as a round, bright spot. But at least it was proof—this was no hallucination.

On September 11, an Air Force jet pilot spotted a gleaming disc flying over New Jersey at 900 miles an hour. Three days later, at Los Alamos, a saucer was seen maneuvering not far from the Atomic Energy laboratory. (Shortly before this, UFO-report forms had been distributed at Los Alamos, after saucers were sighted over several atomic installations.)

Later that month, on the 23d, two F-86 jet pilots were scrambled from March Field, California. Vectored by GCI, they spotted a round, silvery object flying a controlled orbit at 50,000 feet. The strange machine passed over the jets, kept on circling above them. Four more jets were scrambled, but none of the pilots was able to reach the UFO's altitude.⁶

It seems the editors of the UFO evidence were more interested in compiling a whole bunch of cases instead of reading the source information closely. In the first paragraph, Keyhoe was talking about events in July. In the second paragraph, he had moved on to September. When he described the event on the 23rd of the month in the third paragraph, he was referring to September and not July. This means the July 23rd event is actually the event from September. For some reason, they still have yet to recognize this as their web site has an entry for this sighting with a brief entry by Brad Sparks.⁷

The July 23rd date is nothing more than a double entry and should be deleted from the best evidence.

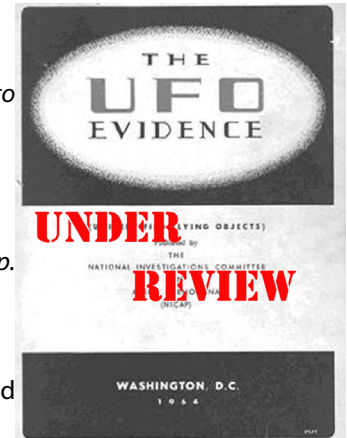
Blue book investigation

Ruppelt gives this sequence of events⁸:

- 7:55 AM local time: Two F-86s on patrol over Long Beach see a UFO above them "high at twelve O'clock". Ground control had no radar contact. F-86s start to climb. F-86s attempted to reach the UFO but it was too high. Described object as a "silver airplane with highly swept back wings".
- Four more F-86s showed up and relieved the first two. They could not reach the UFO either. They estimated its altitude at 55,000 feet. The UFO appeared to speed up as the F-86s got close.
- One more F-86 was sent up to relieve the four, which were running out of fuel. By the time he arrived on station, the UFO had vanished. All of the pilots, with one exception, gave the description of a plane with swept back wings. The pilot, who gave a different description, stated the object was round and silver.

After several months, Ruppelt stated they tried to explain the event as a weather balloon but could not:

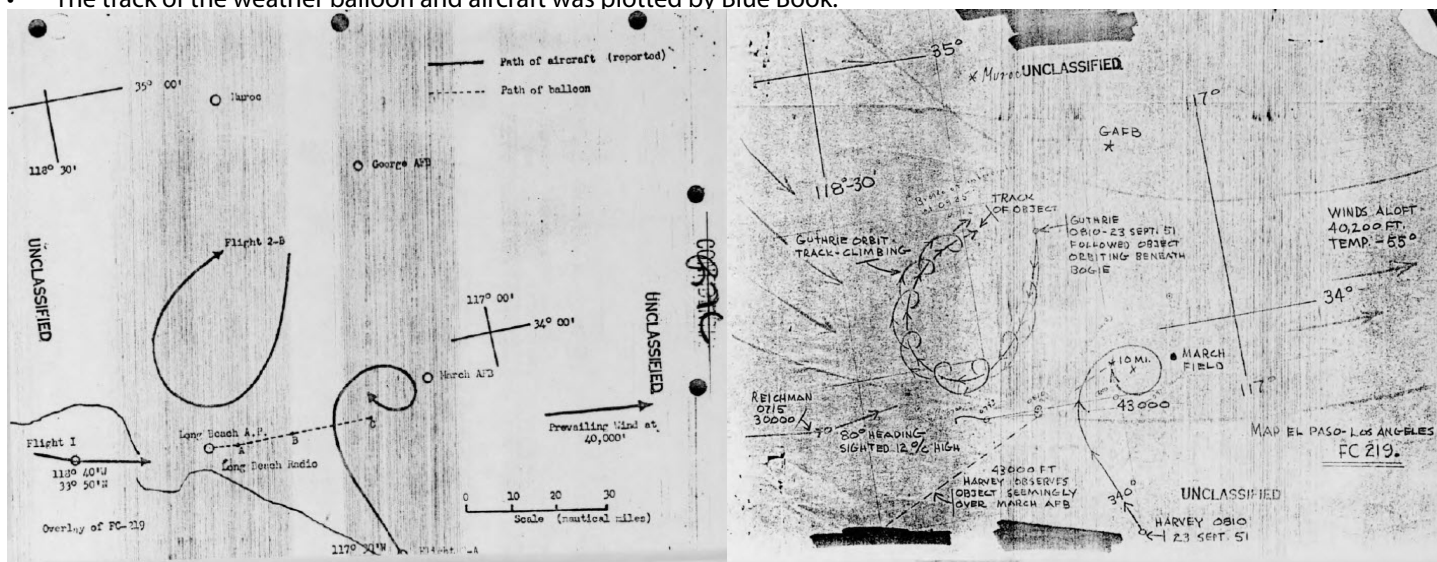
In a few days the data from the Long Beach Incident came in and I started to put it together. A weather balloon had been launched from the Long Beach Airport, and it was in the vicinity where the six F-86's had made their unsuccessful attempt to intercept a UFO. I plotted out the path of the balloon, the reported path of the UFO, and the flight paths of the F-86's. The paths of the balloon and the F-86's were accurate. I knew, because the balloon was being tracked by radio fixes and the F-86's been tracked by radar. At only one point did the paths of the balloon, UFO, and F-86's coincide. When the first two F-86's made their initial visual contact with the UFO they were looking almost directly at the balloon. But from then on, even by altering the course of the F-86's, I couldn't prove a thing.



In addition, the weather observers from Long Beach said that during the period that the intercept was taking place they had gone outside and looked at their balloon; it was an exceptionally clear day and they could see at unusually high altitude. They didn't see any F-86's around it. And one stronger point, the balloon had burst about ten minutes before the F-86's lost sight of the UFO.⁹

The Blue Book file mirrors much of what Ruppelt wrote¹⁰:

- Blue Book notes that there was no radar contact contrary to what NICAP reported.
- 0755 Two F-86s, west of Long Beach, saw the UFO in a left orbit. They could not reach the altitude of the target, estimated at 50,000 feet
- At 0810 or 0815, the two F-86s left the area short on fuel.
- The description was of a swept wing aircraft with the wings swept at 45 degrees.
- At 0800, the four F-86s arrived in the area and split into two elements of two aircraft each.
- At 0845, one of the elements broke off and returned to base. They estimated the target at 50-55,000 feet
- At 0925, the second element returned to base. They described the object as silver and round.
- The weather balloon, that was supposedly the target, was released at 0700 and was lost from view by the observers at 0743.
- The track of the weather balloon and aircraft was plotted by Blue Book.



- The speed of the object was described as "not too fast" by one of the pilots.
- No test aircraft were airborne at the time.
- The weather balloon released from Long Beach was lost at 42,900 feet due to "mechanical difficulties" and was last recorded ascending at 1000 feet/min.
- Captain Guthrie, who was in the flight of four F-86s, stated in his interview that he thought it was a weather balloon.
- Captain Harvey, who was in the flight of four F-86s, stated in his interview that it could have been a weather balloon.
- Captain Reichman, who was in the first flight, thought it was an aircraft conducting a burn.
- There was no indication that the weather office had reported the balloon bursting in their report. Instead, they simply state they lost track of the balloon at 0743.

While there appeared to be some evidence that suggest the object was a balloon, there was also evidence that indicated that the object was not the weather balloon launched from Long Beach.

Another solution?

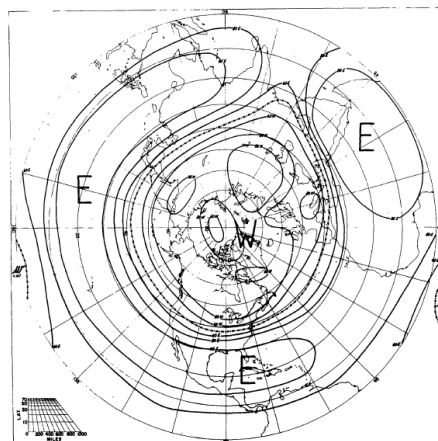
To me, the report sounds more like a large research balloon and not a weather balloon. A research balloon in the sky would have been illuminated by the rising sun (having risen around 0645) and presented a "teardrop shape". This could have been interpreted as an aircraft with swept back wings when viewed at the right angle. The altitude of 50-55,000 feet was only an estimated altitude and it could have been higher.

The biggest source of research balloons in 1951 was Holloman AFB. They have pretty extensive records of balloon launches and there is a potential candidate. On September 21, 1951 a balloon was launched but, after reaching 96,000 feet and 16 hours of flight, they lost track of the balloon.¹¹ The table states there was a separation failure (the payload never was released) but the balloon

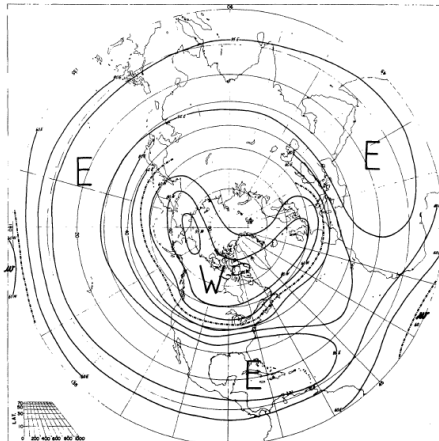
| DATE | CONTRACTOR | MFG | DIAM FT | MILS | LBS | EQUIP WT LBS | ACTUAL | | | IMPACT LOCATION | HDO MILES | LOAD DESCRIPTION | ASCENT RATE FPM | RESULTS | | | | REMARKS | |
|------|------------|----------|---------|------|-----|--------------|--------|---------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------|------|------|------|---------|---|
| | | | | | | | NO | MAX ALT | TOTAL TIME | | | | | NO | DATA | DATA | DATA | | |
| 24 | 5 SEP 51 | MX-11450 | WINZ | 72.8 | 1.0 | 119.0 | 24 | 97.5 | 6.5 | 3 WKS | Fort Bliss Arty Rng | 55 | Canister, ARDF | 1120 | N | F | F | 2 | High ascent rate, balloon descended slowly after re- altitude |
| 25 | 7 SEP 51 | MX-11450 | WINZ | 72.8 | 1.0 | 127.0 | 25 | 94.0 | 11.0 | OK | Craig, N. M. | 150 | Sphere, ARDF | 120 | S | PS | PS | 5 | No floating altitude data, specimens survived |
| 26 | 8 SEP 51 | MX-11450 | GM | 85.0 | 1.3 | 176.0 | 26 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | 2 boxes of cosmic ray plates | --- | D | F | F | 2 | Wind gust destroyed balloon in platform |
| 27 | 9 SEP 51 | MX-11450 | GM | 85.0 | 1.3 | 176.0 | 27 | 51.0 | 1.5 | 1 WK | Pinon, N. M. | 40 | 2 boxes of cosmic ray plates | 782 | U | F | F | 1 | Balloon burst |
| 28 | 21 SEP 51 | MX-11011 | WINZ | 72.8 | 1.0 | 125.0 | 28 | 96.0 | 16.0P | --- | --- | --- | Onie S.U. Infra-red gear 980 AD | --- | S | PS | S | 5 | Separation failure, excellent telemetering data recd |
| 29 | 26 SEP 51 | MX-11498 | GM | 72.8 | 1.0 | 125.0 | 29 | 98.1 | 1.0 | 3 WK | Pinon, N. M. | 40 | Cosmic ray plates, ARDF 637 | --- | S | PS | S | 7 | Good balloon performance, despite patched holes |

performed satisfactorily. The balloon, and its payload, were never recovered.

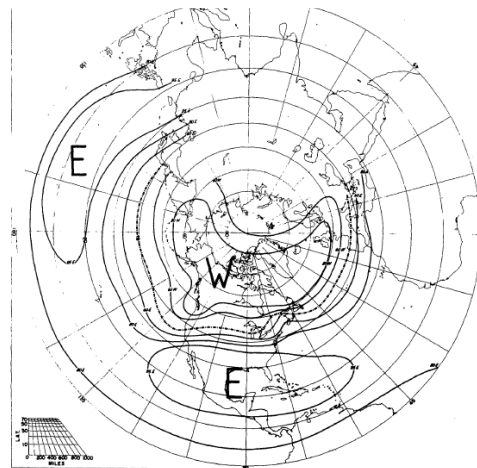
In 1962, A. D. Belmont, of General Mills, produced a report for the Office of Naval Research, with the title, "The stratospheric monsoon". It described how the stratospheric winds changed month by month over the year. The following charts show the prevailing winds for heights of 50mb (approx. 63,000 feet), 30mb (approx. 71,000 feet), and 10 mb (approx 85,000 feet) during the month of September. These winds came from the east, which means a balloon in the stratosphere would have traveled westward.¹²



FREQUENCY OF PREVAILING ZONAL WINDS
SEPTEMBER 50 MB



FREQUENCY OF PREVAILING ZONAL WINDS
SEPTEMBER 30 MB



FREQUENCY OF PREVAILING ZONAL WINDS
SEPTEMBER 10 MB

Specific stratospheric wind data for September of 1951 is hard to come by since balloons usually do not reach these altitudes before they burst. As noted above, it is a fact that the stratospheric winds during the summer months blow towards the west and, as fall arrives, they shift towards the east. Examining the performance of recent research balloons launched during the month of September, from New Mexico over the past six years, confirms this.¹³

| Balloon | Launch date | Landing location | Distance/direction from launch point. |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| HASP | 9/2/16 | Grand View, AZ | 423 NM West |
| HASP | 9/3/13 | Wickenburg, AZ | 434 NM West |
| CONVTEST SALTER | 9/4/15 | Los Alamos, NM | 136 NM NW |
| HASP | 9/8/15 | McIntosh, NM | 86 NM West |
| SFO 490 | 9/12/12 | Santa Rosa, NM | 52 NM WNW |
| JPL Remote | 9/14/14 | Lupton, AZ | 246 NM West |
| COFE/LUBIN | 9/18/11 | Cochran, AZ | 355 NM West |
| Xcaliber | 9/18/16 | Quemado, NM | 238 NM West |
| HEROES | 9/22/13 | Arabella, NM | 35 NM NW |
| WASP | 9/23/12 | Mountain View, NM | 206 NM West |
| Xcaliber | 9/24/14 | Vaughn, NM | 41 NM West |
| GRAPE/FACTEL | 9/24/11 | Cee Vee, TX | 186 NM East |
| JPL | 9/24/11 | Helena, OK | 313 NM ENE |
| BOPPS | 9/26/14 | Wimberly Place, TX | 96 NM East |
| RADX | 9/26/15 | Hagerman, NM | 87 NM South |
| GRAPE | 9/27/14 | Turkey, TX | 175 NM East |
| FAIRBROTHER | 9/28/11 | Muleshoe, TX | 81 NM East |
| JPL Remote | 9/28/16 | Perryton, TX | 210 NM ENE |
| LDB Test | 9/29/16 | Hart, TX | 101 NM East |

Based on this information, it appears that the change occurs around the fall equinox and indicates that it is probable that any stratospheric balloons launched before the 23rd would have drifted towards the west. Long Beach is about 700 miles distant from

Holloman and at an azimuth of about 278 degrees. Assuming the balloon was launched in the morning, the balloon would have traveled at roughly 15-20 mph (13-17 knots) if it took a direct route. This is well within expected wind speeds for the stratosphere.

The tracks of the aircraft attempting intercepts indicate the balloon was drifting towards the NorthWest. The track (in red) is only an approximate one based on the actions of the three different flights of aircraft. While the pilots described themselves cruising directly beneath the object in an orbit of some kind, it is possible it was their own motion that gave the impression that the object was in an orbit. They may have overshoot the target and were circling back to reacquire it.



To drift to the Long Beach area from Holloman, the balloon would have been on almost a westerly course (azimuth 278-280). While, this track indicates a more northwesterly course, a change in the direction of the balloon from West to NorthWest is not that surprising. The stratospheric winds could have begun its autumnal shift towards the east or the balloon could also have been losing altitude at this point in its flight. As it decreased in altitude, the lower stratospheric winds could have shifted towards the northwest.

Solved?

I want to think that the weight of the evidence suggests that the likely source was the Holloman research balloon launched on September 21st. However, the evidence is not as firm as I would like. We don't have any good data about the balloon other than it was launched on the 21st, ascended into the stratosphere, and was never recovered. The rest is all about the probability of it reaching Long Beach in two days. With that being said, it is my opinion that the Holloman AFB research balloon is more likely than something "unknown to science" hovering over Long Beach that morning. The case cannot be considered "best evidence" and should be discarded.

Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 131.
2. *ibid.* P. 20.
3. *ibid.* P. 27
4. *ibid.* P. 131
5. *ibid.* P. 77
6. Keyhoe, Donald. Flying Saucers from outer space. Henry Holt and Company, Inc. New York. 1953. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/books/fsos/chIII.htm>
7. NICAP. RADCAT Case directory. Available WWW: http://www.nicap.org/detection/radar/510723marchfield_dir.htm
8. Ruppelt, Edward J. The report on Unidentified Flying Objects. Doubleday and Company, inc. Garden city, NY. 1956. P. 94-5
9. *ibid.* P. 113-114.

10. September 23, 1951 case file. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/7009452>
11. 6580th test squadron (special). Flight summary of non-extensible balloon operations: June 1950 - October 1954. Holloman air development center. Holloman AFB, New Mexico. P. 4-6.
12. Belmont, A. D. The stratospheric monsoon. Office of Naval Research. Washington D.C. August 3, 1962.
13. Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility. Fort Sumner operations. Available WWW: <https://towerfts.csbf.nasa.gov/>

THE 701 CLUB: CASE 2175 - OCTOBER 19, 1952

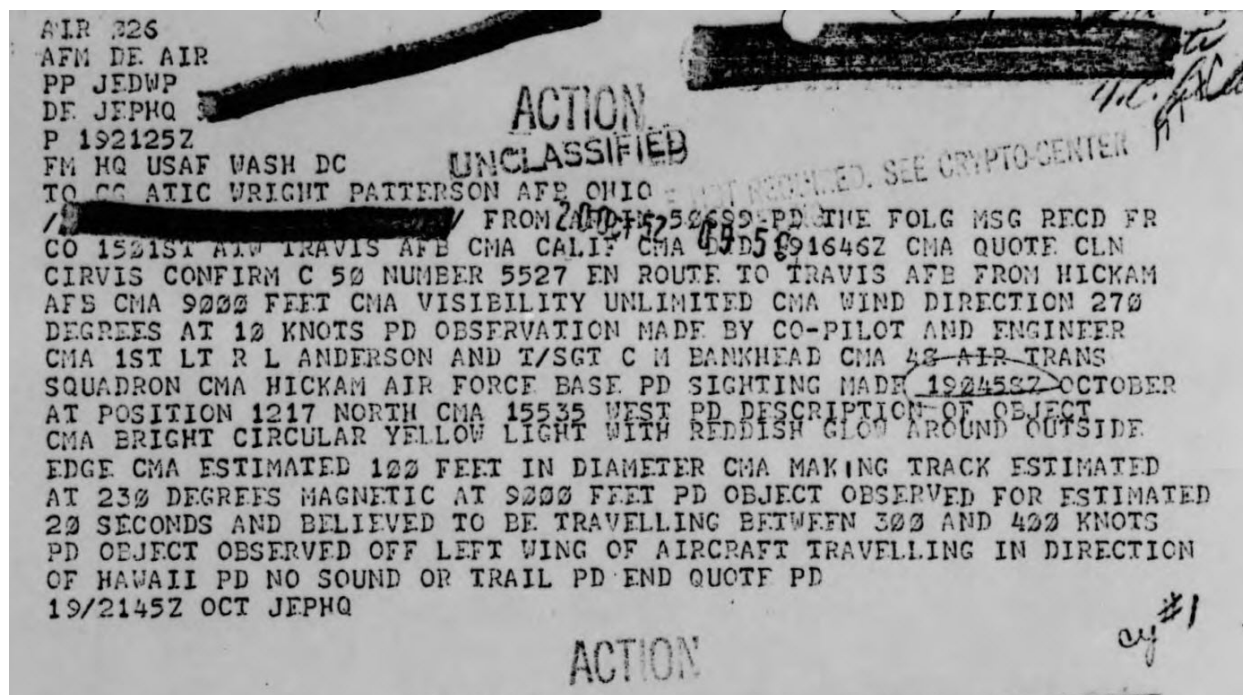
Don Berliner describes the case as follows:

Oct. 19, 1952; 500 miles south of Hawaii. 6:58 p.m. Witnesses: crew of USAF C-50 transport plane. One round yellow light, with a red glowing edge, estimated at 100' in diameter, flew at 300-400 kts. (350-450 m.p.h.) for 20 seconds

This is a sighting over the open ocean. There appears to be no reports from any other aircraft or ships that might have been in the area.

The Blue Book file

The case file is really not very informative. It consists of one single teletype message describing the incident, which involved a C50 aircraft flying eastbound towards California. There is another message in the file, which is unrelated to this sighting and involved another aircraft, in another location, at another time. It has no bearing on this sighting.



In this sighting, two of the crew saw a bright light with a red glow heading towards the Southwest off of their port wing. It was only visible for an estimated twenty seconds.

There is one issue I have with this report. The location of the plane appears to have been wrong. 12 degrees north puts the plane south of Hawaii. The plane was flying from Hickam (on the island of Oahu) to Travis AFB in California. There would have been no reason for the plane to fly south over 500 miles before heading towards California. It is my opinion that the latitude was actually 22 degrees 17 minutes north. This puts the plane roughly 160 miles East-northeast of Honolulu and on a track towards California.

Potential solution?

The event happened about an hour after sunset and was probably a fireball meteor. The estimated duration is within the expected range for a fireball and it did not appear to deviate from a straight course. There is nothing in this report that indicates it was anything else or that it was exotic in nature. In my opinion, this case should be removed from the "unknown" list and placed in the probable meteor category.

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook Unknowns". NICAP Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. October 19, 1952 case file. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/9169250>