

8/1500-c

ATIC NO. --- DATE OF INFO 8 March 1950

NO. NO. --- LOCATION W-P AFB, Dayton

TYPE OF INFO Carbon of R&R SOURCE ATIC Personnel

DATE OF SIGHTING 15 March 1950 DATE IN TO ATIC ---

TIME OF SIGHTING 1020 EST COLOR ---

SHAPE --- SPEED ---

SIZE Large ALTITUDE ---

COURSE --- LENGTH OF THE OBSERVED ---

NO. IN GROUP 1 TYPE OF OBSERVATION ---

ROUND --- MANEUVERS ---

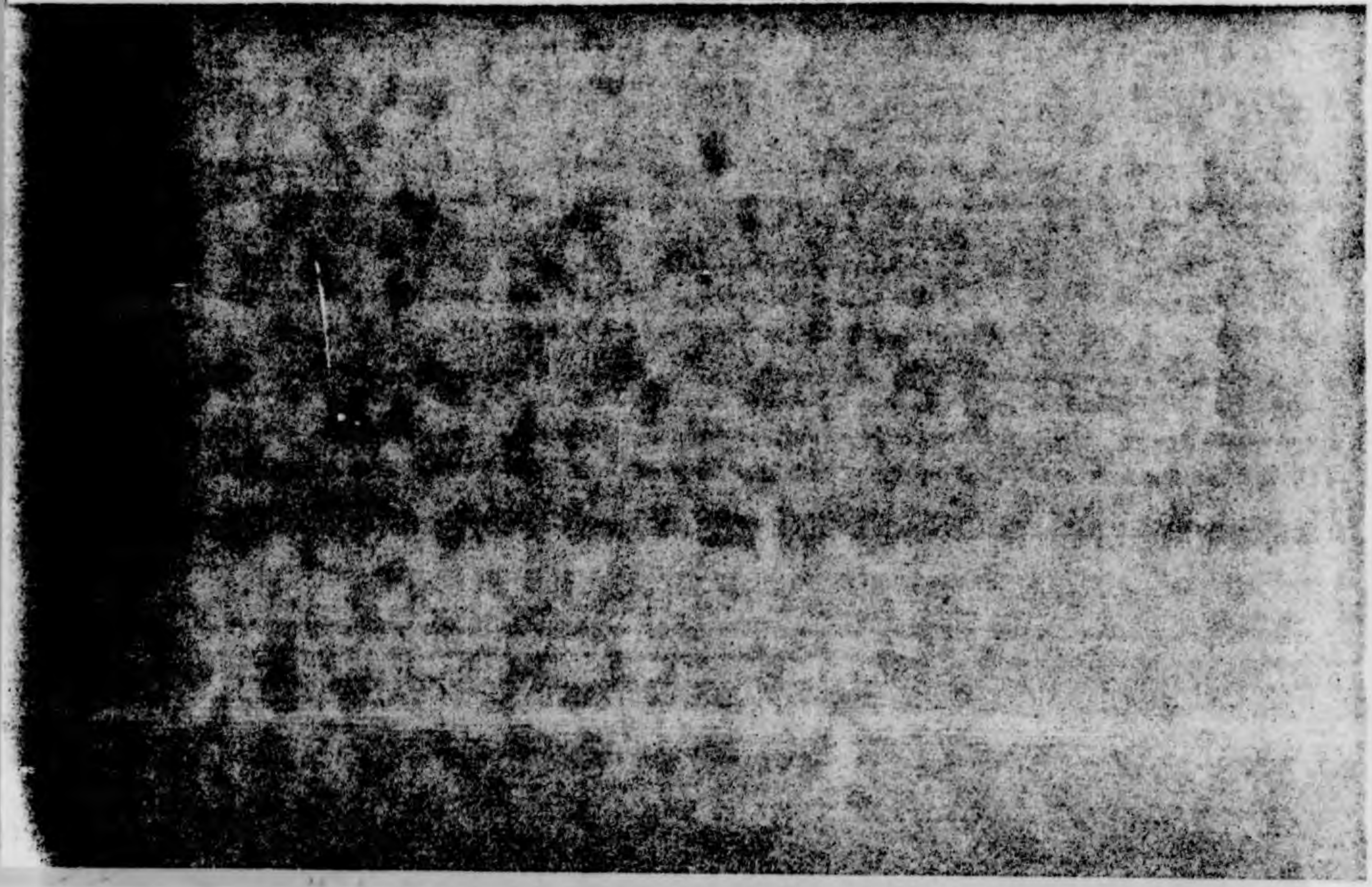
REMARKS --- SKETCHES ---

Temporary ATIC Form 329
(2 Jan 52)

Report of radar sighting at W-P AFB and
visual sighting at Vandalia. Visual sight-
ing was Venus, radar sighting. Was ice
laden cloud.



VISUAL; S. M. IMAG.
ALSO.



UNCLASSIFIED

Excerpt from Daily Intelligence Brief - Secret, Auth: CG, AMC, By: Spencer Whedon, Date: 9 March 1950.

4. AMC INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS ON UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT (RESTRICTED)

AMC investigation of reports on the presence of an unidentified object in the air near Wright-Patterson AF Base, on 8 Mar 50, indicates that the reports resulted from 2 phenomena: ice-crystal clouds which reflected sunlight and registered on radar scopes; and visibility of the planet Venus, which is sometimes observed in daylight. Wright-Patterson pilots, dispatched to search for an object which had been registered on radar scopes, reported nothing but ice haze and clouds. Another pilot reported an object believed to have been Venus.

The following was sent in telecon to A-2

Ref AMC Daily Intelligence Brief dtd 9 March 1950.

AMC investigation of reports on the presence of an unidentified object in the air near Wright-Patterson AF Base, on 8 Mar 50, indicates that the reports resulted from 2 phenomena: ice-crystal clouds which reflected sunlight and registered on radar scopes; and visibility of the planet Venus, which is sometimes observed in daylight. Wright-Patterson pilots, dispatched to search for an object which had been registered on radar scopes, reported nothing but ice haze and clouds. Another pilot reported an object believed to have been Venua.

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

12 Apr 50

AFOIV

Ltr

Unidentified Flying Object

AFOIV-TC

Date 12 Apr 50

No. 1

1. Recommend this material be checked by electronics people, and action be taken as you deem appropriate.

2. Probably, out of courtesy, an answer is required; however, Policy would appear to be the logical office for action. If you concur, adequate background information should be furnished for their preparation of the indorsement.

/s/

R.C. BRIXNER, Captain, USN
Chief, Evaluation Div.

COPY

COVER SHEET

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DOD DIR 5200.10

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ON/AA FILE

1. Forwarded for consideration as noted in para 2 of Comment No. 1.

2. Detailed study has been made of attached letter and inclosures from Continental Air Command. Final analyses were delayed awaiting receipt of twenty-four hour weather reports for 8 and 9 Mar 1950 for Selfridge AFB area.

3. Attention is invited to recommendation in para 5, page 3 of basic letter. It is recommended that the following information be incorporated in reply to Continental Air Command's recommendation:

a. Concur as follows with conclusions reached by Continental Air Command in regard to incident described in basic letter and its inclosures:

(1) "the magnitude of the velocity and accelerations of the three dimensional movements of the 'object' reported are beyond the capability of known heavier or lighter than air vehicles in controlled flight."

(2) "supporting this is the fact that the 'object' was reported as remaining stationary in free space for a mean-period of two minutes."

b. There is a conflict in data on the incident; one witness states that the incident occurred on 8 March (see Incl. 2, page 2, 1st para.) and other witness states incident occurred on 9 March (see Incl. 1, page 1, 1st para.)

c. What is believed to have been a similar incident, also observed by radar (SCR-584), occurred at Wright-Patterson AFB on the morning of 8 March 1950. At approximately 0745 two airline pilots reported that they had seen a long slender body at about 10,000 ft approaching from the northwest. The object was picked up by observers at the Vandalia control tower who observed the object through binoculars. The control tower vectored an F-80 aircraft to the approximate

position of the 'object' but the pilot could see nothing although the control tower was still in visual contact with it. Later, an F-51 attempted to track the object. It could not intercept it. During this time radar had not been able to detect any strange objects of any sort. However, at about 1130 hours signals of large amplitude were being received on an SCR-584. An F-80 was vectored to the approximate location of the targets and reported back that strips of ice laden clouds running northwest to southwest were visible at approximately 10,000 ft. This information concurred with plots obtained by the radar and gave conclusive evidence that the radar targets were in fact reflections from the ice laden clouds. The earlier visual sightings were apparently due to the morning sun shining through the ice laden clouds causing an optical illusion.

d. Although the 'object' observed on radar at Selfridge AFB was characterized by velocities ranging from zero to approximately 420 mph, and erratic changes in altitude which showed no intelligent maneuvering, the observations could easily have been the result of turbulent conditions in ice laden atmosphere. A study of the weather in the Selfridge AFB area during twenty-four hour periods on 8 and 9 March shows that such turbulent conditions could have prevailed. Such conditions are not unusual for that time of year.

e. As in the case of such incidents examined in the past, there has been no evidence that unusual observations have been the result of a new technological advancement by an alien power. In every case where there has been sufficient usable data, it has been ^{found} that a seemingly unusual observation was the result of misidentification. It was for this reason that requirements for special investigation of such incidents and the entire "Project Grudge" (unidentified aerial objects) were cancelled by Hq. USAF earlier this year. The discontinuance of special reporting and consideration has ^{not} stopped the reports of such

SECRET UNCLASSIFIED
13 Apr 50

AFOIV

Ltr

Unidentified Flying Object

AFOIP

incidents. Cursory examination of such reports as have come to the attention of Hq. USAF have merely confirmed the conclusions which 2 (continued) justified discontinuance of the special considerations once given them. Hq. USAF has outstanding requirements with all commands, domestic, and overseas, for the collection of technical intelligence. These are continuously re-emphasized and focused on priority items.

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

RESTRICTED

Telecon No. 241 18 Apr 1950

AMC Item 11

From Lt Col Linstrand MCIA to Maj Boggs D/I Hq USAF

The following reports of an unguided object in the vicinity of W-P AFB are forwarded, reference telephone conversation Maj Boggs 17 Apr:

Report by Captain Robert M. Howe: 8 Mar 50:

"At approximately 7:45 A.M. I was informed by the control tower Patterson Field to search for an unidentified object which was high over the field. The tower told me this object had been originally reported by two airline pilots to the vandalia control tower. The pilots described it as a long, slender body at an estimated altitude of approximately 10,000 feet and approaching from the Northwest. By the time I received this information the Vandalia control had the object sighted with their field glasses.

"At approximately 8:10 A.M. Major Kenneth G. Chilstrom took off in an F-80 to search for it. At this time and for approximately the next hour the Vandalia control tower had the object visually located, and they gave this location as about 155-160 degrees bearing from the tower. They did not know the altitude or distance from the station, but they estimated it to be at the height of the high cirrus clouds over the field. These clouds were at an altitude of 30,000 ft.

"At approximately 8:30 AM I called Colonel Osgood of the Electronic subdivision to get any radar assistance the Division might be able to give. I also contacted Captain Whiting of the all weather division for assistance of the all weather search radar which is located at Jamestown, Ohio. At this time, the Vandalia tower was still in visual contact with the object, and they were attempting to direct Major Chilstrom to its location, but they were unsuccessful. At one time, Major Chilstrom said the tower identified his position as 'apparently fairly close to the object' but he was unable to identify any object or body of any kind. Shortly afterwards, however, a National Guard pilot from Vandalia, Colonel Shaefer, sighted an object when he was on the ground, and he took off in a F-51 and attempted to track it. After he landed, I talked to Colonel Shaefer, and he reported to me that he followed it for 20 to 30

minutes and the object did not change its position.' Because of this Colonel Shaefer thought it might be a 'heavenly body'. During all of this time, neither radar was able to detect any strange bodies of any sort.

"At approximately 11:30 AM I received a telephone call from the Electronic subdivision radar station. The operator in charge reported to me that the operators had an unidentified object in their scope 35 miles east of the station at a relative bearing of 105 degrees to the station. This object had an echo 100 miles in width. At this time I called Colonel Watson, Military Intelligence Division and relayed this information to him. "I wish

"I wish to report that I contacted the base operations office at Patterson Field immediately after I attempted to establish the radar search and advised the operations officer on duty to contact any interested organizations of either the base or Headquarters AMC.

"At 10:00 AM I contacted the public relations officer of Headquarters AMC and notified the officer that a report of an unidentified object had been made. I also notified this officer that both the electronics division and all weather division had assisted in the search for the unidentified body. To the best of my knowledge, I do not recall divulging any additional information to the public relations office."

Report by Mr. James and Mr. Johnson, 9 Mar 50:

" At approximately 11:30 AM., 8 March 1950, Mr. R. L. James and the writer were informed that unidentified signals of very large amplitude were being received on the SCR-584 in Area B. It was also reported that unidentified objects described as celestial bodies were observed earlier in the day. Mr. James and the writer proceeded to the radar site in order to observe the signals and suggested that, although the signals were undoubtedly weather conditions, it would be advisable to check by performing an air interception. An F-80 aircraft was vectored to the approximate location of the targets and reported back that strips of ice laden clouds running northwest to southwest were visible at approximately 10,000 ft. This information concurred with plots obtained by the radar forming conclusive evidence that the radar targets were in fact reflections from the ice laden clouds.

"It is believed that the visible sightings may have been due to the early morning sun shining through the ice laden clouds causing an optical illusion."

Flyer Chases Object, Says It Was Star

"I feel darn foolish about this whole thing . . .

"I'm convinced I took off and went chasing a star or some kind of celestial body."

That's the way Lt. Col. Dale Shafer Jr., air national guard pilot, last night described his "flying saucer chase" yesterday when a strange object was sighted in the sky over the Dayton Municipal airport.

"I was having some coffee when word came from the control tower that some kind of an object had been sighted," the officer explained. "A short time later—about 9 a. m.—I was up in the sky trying to find out what all the excitement was about."

Like Evening Star

"I saw it, all right . . . a light about the same as you see when you look at a star in the evening."

He flew his fast F-51 fighter plane to an altitude of about 38,000 feet and was probably the last person to actually see the object because ground observers reported it disappeared behind a cloud bank.

"It didn't wiggle one iota," the pilot said.

"That's why I'm convinced that it was some kind of a celestial body and not a flying saucer," the officer said. "If it had been a saucer it would have unquestionably shown some movement."

George Barnes, airport control tower operator, who first reported seeing the object in the predawn sky was quoted as saying he saw "definite movement toward the southwest."

Appeared To Move

Likewise, Sherman Seydler, chief tower operator for the CAA who also observed the "spot in the sky" said that it appeared to move.

One observer described it: "The thing looked like a bullet and it left a vapor trail behind it."

Another person said: "It seemed to suddenly stop then made a long sweeping climb."

Adeline Rudick, a TWA ticket-counter employe said when she first saw it the thing appeared in the sky—"like a bright and shiny dime."

Shafer said he called Dr. Louis Saletel, dean of science at the University of Dayton and asked him if it were possible to see a celestial body in this position and at the particular time of day.

The officer said the dean replied: "Yes."

Last night, Brother Saletel said: "Venus is very bright these days and it is entirely possible this planet might be visible during the daylight hours."

Investigators At Field

Late yesterday afternoon investigators from Wright Field were at the airport interviewing the Air Guard officers and other personnel who said they had seen the object in the sky.

The "investigators" moved about almost as mysteriously as the mysterious object itself. They refused to give their names to any outsiders including the press and they seemed very "secretive" about their mission.

One of the operatives said he was connected with the "office of special investigation" at Wright Field.

It was also reported that two jet plane pilots from the AMC flight test division took off and tried to locate the "thing." According to PIO sources neither of the pilots reported seeing the object.

DAYTON JOURNAL-
HERALD 9 MAR 50

"Flying Saucer" Didn't Wiggle; Airman Believes It Was Star

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DAYTON J. H
9 MAR 50



LEFT TO RIGHT are Capt. William Littlejohn, Maj. Henry T. Sturtevant, Lt. Col. Dale E. Shafer Jr. and Capt. Charles Cook, pictured with an F-51 after they investigated a celestial object reported seen here Wednesday morning.

Strange Object Sighted Over City; Pursuit Attempts Futile

What was believed to be an unidentified celestial body was sighted in the sky over Dayton Wednesday morning. A chase by high-speed aircraft was started immediately, but to little avail.

The strange phenomenon was observed for a period of about two and a half hours by personnel at the Civil Aeronautics Administration control tower, U. S. Weather Bureau officials and Air National Guard officers at the Dayton Municipal airport.

None of those who observed the body would make any attempt to identify it definitely.

George Barnes, tower operator, first spotted the object high in the sky and to the north and east of the tower. Barnes notified the Air National Guard and the Wright-Patterson AFB control tower.

Barnes first notified the pilot of a Trans World airline westbound flight which was putting in to the airport at that time. The airline pilot saw the object but could not identify it.

BARNES SAID when he first saw the object it appeared to have a bullet-like shape. "It appeared to be about two feet across at that distance. It shone with a brilliance that looked like the sun shining on bright metal.

"I kept watching the object, then reached for my binoculars," Barnes said. "When I trained the glasses on the object it looked more spherical in shape. At that time there was definite movement toward the southwest.

"Definitely," Barnes stated,

"the body seemed to stop. It hovered for a few seconds then shot upward at a terrific speed. It was like a balloon rising. In a matter of minutes the object was no more than three inches across. After a half hour it was just a pinpoint of light. We all expected it would continue right out of sight, but it didn't. It stayed in that relative position for some time."

A cloud cover moved in over the airport at about 9:35 a. m. cutting off further observance.

Barnes said witnesses in the control tower and other personnel from the weather bureau and airline offices watched the body after he called them.

LT. COL. DALE SHAFER, ANG pilot, was called to the Municipal airport base and took off in an F-51 Mustang fighter shortly before 9 a. m. Col. Shafer had the object in sight at takeoff.

He lost it after takeoff but picked it up again at about 20,000 feet. It was then 9:05 a. m.

"I was about five miles east of the airport at the time," Col. Shafer reported. "I maintained my climb up to 40,000 feet. At that altitude I could still see the body. It was just a mere pinpoint of light. There were no vapor or smoke trails of any type.

"I followed the body for from 75 to 100 miles at speeds varying from 300 to 350 miles per hour. During that time, the object remained in a relative position to my planet grew no larger. If it moved the movement was almost imperceptible. The sun was about half-way up

from the horizon during this time."

"The body," Col. Shafer said, "had the brilliance of a star at twilight. It was, I guess, of medium intensity. I am almost positive that it was some type of celestial body, just what type I couldn't say." Three other ANG pilots also took off in search of the object. They were: Capt. William Littlejohn, Capt. Charles Cook and Maj. Henry Sturtevant.

AFTER RECEIVING WORD of the discovery, Air Materiel Command's flight test division sent two F-80 jets up to attempt to track the body. Radar equipment at the base was also trained in the reported direction of the body.

Public Information office officials at 10:30 a. m. issued a statement to the effect that neither of the two jet plane pilots had seen the object. Neither was the body picked up on any of the radar screens.

Gilley Stephens, chief of the U. S. Weather Bureau station at the airport, observed the object for about two hours.

"Movement of the body was almost imperceptible," Stephens said.

"As we observed it at intervals, however, it was clear that its motion was toward the southwest. It finally disappeared from view of the naked eye in that direction.

"The body," Stephens commented, "had no relative position to the sun. I don't believe it was either a star or planet, however.

"As to its appearance it shone as would a silver weather balloon or aircraft when the sun was shining on it."

8 MARCH

FINAL GALLEY PROOF

Galley 31—THE WORLD OF FLYING SAUCERS

Venus as a Morning Star

One of the "best" UFOs of the year 1950 appeared when Venus performed in plain sight of the ATIC offices at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio [2, p. 103].

About midmorning on March 8 a TWA plane, coming in to land at Dayton municipal airport, was circling to get into the traffic pattern when both pilot and copilot noticed an extremely bright light hovering in the southeast. Much brighter and larger than a star, it appeared and disappeared in the high, thick, scattered clouds. The tower operators, who also saw it, immediately telephoned the Ohio Air National Guard and officials at ATIC. Within minutes the UFO had attracted an audience of exceptionally well-qualified observers. Air Force experts on unidentified flying objects watched it from the ground, technicians studied returns on the radar screens at the laboratory at Wright Field, and the pilots of two hastily scrambled F-51s tried to intercept it.

The radar operators, who reported returns from both UFO and pursuit planes, called the pilots and vectored them in toward the target. Both pilots could see the light at first, but when they had climbed to about 15,000 feet they found themselves in clouds so thick that neither could see the other plane, and the unknown was no longer visible. Since ground radar reported that the planes were getting closer to the target, the pilots decided to continue, on instruments, but they separated to avoid the danger of colliding with each other. In a few seconds they were deep in dense cloud. Flying conditions were far worse than they had expected and the planes were icing up fast. Nevertheless the pilots kept climbing until ground radar advised them that they were almost on target. Realizing that if a solid object actually were ahead of them they would hit it before they could see it, the pilots immediately descended to below the clouds and circled, hoping for a break in the overcast, until ground radar reported that the target was fading fast. The planes then landed. When the clouds broke momentarily, after about an hour, the UFO was not visible.

A conference took place at ATIC that afternoon to discuss the identity of the mysterious light and the cause of the radar echoes. A check showed that the position of the UFO had been identical with that of Venus. The light, the conference concluded, had been Venus. One pilot later disagreed, arguing that the light had not looked to him like a planet and that if the object had been Venus it should have appeared, but did not, at the same time on the following day. The prevailing weather conditions, however, would have distorted the image and made it unlike the pale light of Venus occasionally visible in the daytime. It was not visible at all the following day because of different weather conditions.

The radar returns, the investigators found, had come from the clouds and were unrelated to the light. Both planes had

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

FOR MATERIAL COMMAND

Use this form for inter-office correspondence within headquarters.

Use authorized office symbols to designate addressor and addressee.

Place initials of dictator and typist, telephone number and location to right of signature.

Number all comments consecutively.

Note warning signal at lower left of form. Remaining space is sufficient only for proper spacing of typewritten signature.

Separate comments by horizontal lines across page.

Use entire width of sheet, both sides.

SUBJECT Unidentified Object Incident of 8 March 1950

TO FROM MCLAXA DATE 15 Mar 50 COMMENT NO. 1

MCLAXA, Col Hemstreet (to note) *R.S.A.*
 MCLIA, Col Feiling (to note) *[Signature]*
 MCI, Col Watson (to note) *[Signature]*
 MCLAXA-1, Mr. Rodgers (to file with
 (In Turn) Project GRUDGE)

1. At 1020, 8 Mar 50, Col Watson called the undersigned stating that various reports on an unidentified object had reached his office, and that I was directed to investigate the matter and take whatever steps I felt necessary. Col Watson referred me to Capt Howe, Ext 64106, and Sgt Guzi, Ext 22140.

2. The undersigned contacted Capt Howe immediately and received the information relative to his activities as contained in inclosure 1. Following the receipt of this information by telephone, I requested Capt Howe to prepare the inclosure as quickly as possible in order that the facts as I received them could be recorded without distortion. I next called Sgt Guzi and obtained information that the radar scanner that he was operating gave a signal of tremendous size and that the random motion of the signals precluded cloud formations. He further stated that the range of the signal covered 90° and was from 20-40,000 distance in range. These reports varied until 1140, at which time he notified me that he had lost the signal because the object had come closer to the field than fifteen miles.

3. At 1030 various crews were alerted to accomplish the following tasks:

a. Messrs Deyarmond and Kobernuss assigned to Vandalia Airport to interrogate personnel reported to have observed the object. Investigation report contained in inclosure 2.

b. Mr. Johnson dispatched to the radar site in Area B to investigate unknown radar targets. Report of investigation is contained in inclosure 3.

4. Col Feiling contacted Col Paul in Flight Test Division to arrange for dispatching of observation airplanes, and repaired to the radar station in Area B to utilize the radar search facilities and a mobile ground transmitting station in order that the aircraft could be properly orientated. Arrangements with ~~Mr.~~ Brown, Ext 20310, Area-B, were accomplished to bring the mobile transmitting station into operation at the radar site, using channel B for contact with the airplanes.

5. The final results of the investigation indicated that the object seen at Vandalia Airport was probably the planet Venus, and that the contact with WPAFB resulted in the radar scanning of ice laden-clouds which gave registration on the radar scope that appeared to be an unidentified object of tremendous size. The dispatching of the aircraft to the scene of the unidentified object disclosed the fact that the radar scope picked up the ice laden clouds.

ANALYSIS DIVISION FILE
 30-5-0
 FILE NUMBER UNCLASSIFIED
JJR
 INITIALS

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 DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.

6-41

AMC EXPERIMENTAL TEST PILOT SCHOOL
FLIGHT TEST DIVISION
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE
DAYTON, OHIO

8 March 1950

SUBJECT: Report of Unidentified Object in Vicinity of
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

At approximately 7:45 A.M. I was informed by the Control Tower, Patterson Field to search for an unidentified object which was high over the field. The Tower told me this object had been originally reported by two airline pilots to the Vandalia Control Tower. The pilots described it as a long slender body at an estimated altitude of approximately 10,000 ft and approaching from the north west. By the time I received this information the Vandalia Control Tower had the object sighted with their field glasses.

At approximately 8:10 A.M. Major Kenneth O. Chilstrom took off in an F-80 to search for it. At this time and for approximately the next hour the Vandalia Control Tower had the object visually located, and they gave this location as about "155-160° bearing from the Tower". They did not know the altitude or distance from the station, but they estimated it to be at the height of the high cirrus clouds over the field. These clouds were at an altitude of 30,000 ft.

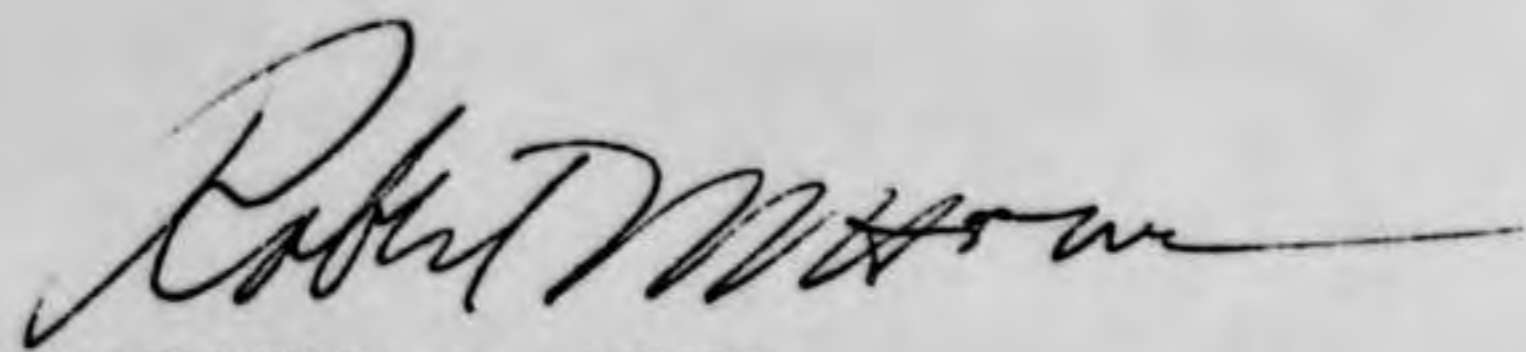
At approximately 8:30 A.M. I called Colonel Osgood of the Electronic Subdivision to get any Radar assistance the division might be able to give. I also contacted Captain Whiting of the All Weather Division for assistance of the All Weather Search Radar which is located at Jamestown, Ohio. At this time, the Vandalia Tower was still in visual contact with the object, and they were attempting to direct Major Chilstrom to its location, but they were unsuccessful. At one time, Major Chilstrom said the Tower identified his position as "apparently fairly close to the object", but he was unable to identify any object or body of any kind.

Shortly afterwards, however, a National Guard pilot from Vandalia, Colonel Shaerer, sighted an object when he was on the ground, and he took off in an F-51 and attempted to track it. After he landed, I talked to Colonel Shaerer, and he reported to me that "he followed it for 20 to 30 minutes and the object did not change its position". Because of this, Colonel Shaerer thought it might be a "heavenly body". During all of this time, neither Radar was able to detect any strange bodies of any sort.

At approximately 11:30 A.M. I received a telephone call from the Electronic Subdivision Radar station. The operator in charge reported to me that the operators had an unidentified object in their scope 35 miles east of the station at a relative bearing of 105° to the station. This object had an echo 100 miles in width. At this time I called Colonel Watson, Military Intelligence Division and relayed this information to him.

I wish to report that I contacted the Base Operations office at Patterson Field immediately after I attempted to establish the Radar search and advised the operations officer on duty to contact any interested organizations of either the Base or Headquarters, AMC.

At 10:00 A.M. I contacted the Public Relations Officer of Headquarters, AMC and notified the officer that a report of an unidentified object had been made. I also notified this officer that both the Electronics Division and All Weather Division had assisted in the search for the unidentified body. To the best of my knowledge, I do not recall divulging any additional information to the Public Relations Office.



ROBERT M. HOWE
Captain, USAF
10616A

UNCLASSIFIED

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED AT VANDALIA AIRPORT REGARDING SIGHTING OF "STRANGE OBJECT"

1. Two representatives of the Intelligence Department, Hq AMC, W-P AFB, Mr. Albert Deyarmond and Mr. Fred Kobernuss, talked with several people at the Vandalia airport with regard to the sighting of an unidentified object on the morning of 8 March 1950.

2. Names of people who were interrogated with regard to this phenomenon are:

- a. Mr. George Barnes, Airport Traffic Controller;
CAA (Dayton Tower)
- b. Mr. Sherman Seydler, Chief Airport Traffic Controller;
CAA (Dayton Tower)
- c. Mr. Stevens; Chief, Weather Bureau
- d. Mr. Fordham; Weather Bureau
- e. Lt Colonel Dale E. Shafer; Chief, Operations Officer,
National Guard Squadron at Vandalia airport

3. Interrogation of Mr. Barnes:

Mr. Barnes stated that at approximately 0650 he sighted an object in the direction of E/NE; that is at a bearing of about 70°. The reason for noticing this object was that it moved rather fast and seemed quite luminous. It appeared bullet shaped and left a vapor trail in its wake. The vapor trail was approximately six times the object's diameter, and the end of the vapor trail remained at the same distance behind the object throughout the course of movement. When the object finally stopped it was at a bearing of approximately 120° (possibly 180°), and in the general direction of S/SW. It took approximately five seconds for the object to travel from the 70° bearing to the 120° bearing. The angle of elevation during this entire movement was 15° above the horizon. The "object" diameter seemed to be about two feet. After the object stopped, he decided to call several other people who were at work at that time (about 7:15 A.M.) and requested them to take a look at it through binoculars. Mr. Seydler, Miss J. Kesling, and several others came to the tower and observed the object. The object hovered in the position for several minutes and seemed to be a sphere. Its brilliance suggested that it could possibly have been made of aluminum. A TWA flight, No. 21, piloted by Captain D. W. Miller, was coming into the Vandalia airport at about the time this object stopped its horizontal travel. The pilot was notified and requested to locate the object, but did not do so until he was told to turn in a direction of S/SW. Pilot Miller radioed in that he had sighted the object but could not determine what it was. At about the same time Mr. Barnes called the Patterson Tower. By that time the object had begun to ascend. It was kept in sight for about 2½ - 3 hours by means of binoculars, and all that time it was ascending at what seemed to be a terrific speed. It was definitely going into the wind while rising, and its size seemed to decrease about one-half from that when it was first sighted. At approximately 10 A.M. the object disappeared due to cloud cover closing in.

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

4. Interrogation of Mr. Seydler:

Mr. Seydler observed the object between the hours of 0300 and 1000. He noted that the sphere seemed to be thin when it turned; however, he believed that sun reflection might have had something to do with this apparition. He claims that the object travelled to a height above 30,000 feet since high cirrus clouds were present at approximately 29,000 to 30,000 feet and he thought that he noticed the clouds to be between the ground and the object. He could not determine the distance of the object in any other way. He further gave information as to the strength of the surface winds at the time. He stated that ground surface winds were south-westerly and blowing at 25 mph. The TWA Flight No. 21 reported high velocity winds at altitude, and the pilot thought they were westerly in direction. Mr. Seydler stated that the captain of the TWA flight saw the object approximately 15 minutes after the object was first called to his (the pilot's) attention. (NOTE: Mr. Barnes omitted this piece of information during his interrogation.) Furthermore, Mr. Seydler also remarked that the pilot did not see the object too clearly and would not definitely describe it as man-powered or of being a type of flying saucer.

5. Interrogation of Mr. Stevens:

Mr. Stevens came into the tower at approximately 0730 and observed the object with binoculars and the naked eye. He stated that it seemed to be a very luminous disk and reminded him of a cosmic balloon. He stated that the object ascended into the wind and was under observation for approximately two and one-half hours until cloud cover obscured it.

6. Interrogation of Mr. Fordham:

Mr. Fordham observed the object a few minutes after it had stopped, (as told to him by Mr. Barnes) and continued to watch its progress as it ascended. His opinion was that a meteor or some other celestial body had come into the earth's orbit and by some means or other became a temporary satellite. He made some mention of the fact that the object resembled a weather balloon of the type he had observed during his past years of weather forecasting experience.

7. Interrogation of Lt Colonel Shafer:

Lt Colonel Shafer observed people rushing past his office at a few minutes before 0800 and therefore decided to see what the excitement was about. He went to the tower in order to observe the object which had been reported to be visible from there. At first sight, it impressed him as being no more than a star although he claims that other people observing the object were observing various details which he could not see. He observed it with both the naked eye and binoculars, and did not notice anything unusual about the object and his opinion did not waver from his original impression; that is, that the object was a bright star. However, since Mr. Barnes, who was the only one to have seen the object move in a horizontal direction, insisted

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that this had happened, Colonel Shafer decided to chase the object in an F-51. Colonel Shafer reported to the tower at various times during his climb to altitude and said that at no time during the climb did the angle of elevation (about 40°) between him and the object vary, neither did the azimuth vary. According to Colonel Shafer, the object was at a bearing of $165-170^{\circ}$ and no variation in this position was noticed during the entire flight. Colonel Shafer maintains that the object was a star since its angle of elevation never varied (that is, when seen from the ground or from the air), and furthermore, that its bearing of $165-170^{\circ}$ did not change. Colonel Shafer stated that he reached an indicated altitude of 38,000 feet but that he could not approach the object and decided to return to the Vandalia airport since his oxygen supply system maintains a pressure altitude of only 35,000 feet within the cockpit. He did remember that as he gained altitude the intensity of the object increased, but this only strengthened his opinion that the object was a star. After returning to his office he decided to call the University of Dayton and consult an astronomer there. The astronomer notified Colonel Shafer that the angle of elevation and the general bearing of the object corresponded with the position of the planet Venus at this time of year.

8. Comments of Intelligence Department Representatives:

It appears that the object observed at the Vandalia airport on 8 March 1950 was the planet Venus. Mr. Barnes, who first observed the object, is on the "graveyard" shift and perhaps was somewhat exhausted from his night duties. A morning mist was present on 8 March and this mist may have caused a refraction of the light rays transmitted by the planet Venus thus giving the appearance of a luminous sphere travelling at a rather high rate of speed. It should be remembered that the object was observed before sunrise (at approximately 0650) and that the sky was beginning to become quite bright, and that movement of mist and/or smoke could have given the appearance of vapor trails emanating from the object. After the object had apparently stopped; Mr. Barnes notified several other people so that his story could be confirmed; however, all of these witnesses saw the object at approximately the same bearing; that is, $160-170^{\circ}$ and watched it ascend in a direction from N/NE to S/SW. This corresponds to the general celestial path of Venus. It is therefore concluded that the object was, in all probability, the planet Venus, and that some unusual phenomenon such as peculiarities of light ray refraction gave the appearance of a luminous sphere travelling at high speed.

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Mr. A. H. Sullivan

9 March 1950

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Mr. R. A. Johnson

Investigation of Unknown Radar Targets

1. At approximately 11:30 AM, 8 March 1950, Mr. R. L. James and the writer were informed that unidentified signals of very large amplitude were being received on the SCR-584 in Area B. It was also reported that unidentified objects described as celestial bodies were observed earlier in the day. Mr. James and the writer proceeded to the radar site in order to observe the signals and suggested that, although the signals were undoubtedly weather conditions, it would be advisable to check by performing an air interception. An F-30 aircraft was vectored to the approximate location of the targets and reported back that strips of ice laden clouds running northwest to southeast were visible at approximately 10,000 feet. This information concurred with plots obtained by the radar forming conclusive evidence that the radar targets were in fact reflections from the ice laden clouds.

2. It is believed that the visible sightings may have been due to the early morning sun shining through the ice laden clouds causing an optical illusion.

R. A. JOHNSON

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