[redacted]

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD Incident #117

ATIC NO. ---

DATE OF INFO 7 May 48

AF NO. ---

LOCATION Memphis, Tenn.

REPORT NO. ---

SOURCE Female Civilians

DATE OF REPORT ---

DATE IN TO ATIC ---

TIME OF SIGHTING 1500 to 1700

COLOR Shiny - like bright aluminum

SHAPE Unknown - possibly like meteor

SPEED Faster than any aircraft Estimated / Measured

SIZE Very small

ALTITUDE Extremely high Estimated / Measured

COURSE Easterly

LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED ---

NO. IN GROUP 50 or 60

TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground

SOUND ---

MANEUVERS Most travelled straight line although some zig-zagged.

PHOTOS --- SKETCHES ---

Temporary ATIC Form 329
(2 Jan 52)

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #117 -- Memphis, Tennessee -- 7 May 1948

It is unlikely that the objects viewed in this incident were meteors, but the possibility is not excluded.

It is unfortunate that some estimate of distance and of time in sight was not made. Objects might have been quite close, in which case large angular velocity would not imply great speed.

This investigator would like to emphasize again the need for better reporting of such incidents.

UNCLASSIFIED

CHECK-LIST - UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Incident # [redacted] 117

1. Date 7 May 48
2. Time 1500 to 1700
3. Location Memphis, Tenn.
4. Name of observer Miss [redacted] Housekeeper et ~~xk~~ al (see other side)
5. Occupation of observer Housekeeper
6. Address of observer [redacted], Memphis, Tenn.
7. Place of observation Memphis, Tenn.
8. Number of objects 50 or 60
9. Distance of object from observer N/S
10. Time in sight N/S
11. Altitude extremely high
12. Speed faster than any aircraft witnesses had ever seen
13. Direction of flight easterly
14. Tactics Most traveled in straight line alt o some of them zig-zagged.
15. Sound None
16. Size Very small
17. Color shiny - like bright aluminum
18. Shape unknown - possibly like meteor
19. Odor detected N/S
20. Apparent construction N/S
21. Exhaust trails Some objects seemed to have a silvery tail which might have been exhaust
22. Weather conditions CAVU, wind: 330 to 340°, 15 MPH at surface increasing to 66 MPH at 20,000; Surface temp: 72°; dew point 43° relative humidity 40%
23. Effect on clouds N/S
24. Sketches or photographs None
25. Manner of disappearance N/S
26. Remarks: (over)

Fifty to 60 shiny objects were seen moving at a speed faster than any known aircraft on an Easterly heading at an extremely high altitude. For the most part these objects traveled in a straight line altho some of them zig-zagged slightly. No sound was heard. Some objects seemed to have a silvery tail which might have been exhaust. These objects could not have been weather balloons as only one balloon was released by the Memphis Weather Bureau that day.

NOTE: Witnesses thought they had seen a meteor; however subsequent investigation seemed to preclude this possibility.
See Supp II to Trip Report to Memphis - Visit with Dr. Paul Herget of the Observatory of Cincinnati, Ohio, in which Dr. Herget expressed serious doubt that the 50 or more objects observed 7 May 48 in Memphis were meteors. He, was, however unable to offer any explanation as to a possible identification of the objects.

Dr. Hynak of OSU and Dr. Lincoln LaPaz are to be consulted about the possibility of ~~them~~ these being a meteor shower.

Witness of this incident were: Mr. [redacted], salesman
[redacted], Memphis

Mrs. [redacted], housewife
[redacted], Memphis, Tenn.

[redacted] RAC

12

UNCLASSIFIED

MCIA/JCB/amb
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
xxxxxxxx

MCIA

APR 22 1948

Project "SIGN"

Director of Intelligence
General Staff
United States Army
Washington 25, D. C.
ATTENTION: CSGID

The attached copy of teletype from Fort McPherson, Georgia, is forwarded for your information.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

1 Incl
cy teletype fr
Ft McPherson

H. M. McCOY
Colonel, USAF
Chief of Intelligence

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

AM USCS 53 APR 1 1:21
F.B.I. - Chicago

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

EA)261 CO UEDG URGENT URGENT

FM UEAC33A/CG FTMCPHERSON GA 081645Z

TO COMGEN WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB DAYTON OHIO

WD GRNC

[redacted] UNCLASSIFIED

PASS TO DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE GSUSA UNCONVENTIONAL AIRCRAFT APPROXIMATELY FIFTY OR SIXTY IN NUMBER SIGHTED AT MEMPHIS TENN SEVEN MAY NINETEEN FORTY EIGHT BETWEEN FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTENN HUNDRED HOURS PD WEATHER CLEAR VISIBILITY UNLIMITED AND UNRESTRICTED WIND DIRECTION THREE HUNDRED THIRTY TO THREE HUNDRED FORTY DEGREES WIND SPEED FIFTEEN M P H AT SURFACE INCREASED TO SIXTY SIX M P H AT TWENTY THOUSAND FT SURFACE TEMPERATURE SEVENTY TWO DEGREES DEW POINT FORTY THREE RELATIVE HUMIDITY FORTY PERCENT WITNESSES MISS [redacted] [redacted] MEMPHIS TENN MR [redacted] SALESMAN [redacted] MEMPHIS MRS [redacted] MEMPHIS NO PHOTOS APPEARANCE POSSIBLY LIKE A METEOR SIZE PROBABLY SMALL COLOR SHINY SPEED FASTER THAN ANY AIR CRAFT WITNESSES HAVE EVER SEEN DIRECTION OF TRAVEL EAST MANEUVERABILITY STRAIGHT LINE SOME SLIGHTLY ZIG-ZAG ALTITUDE EXTREMELY HIGH ESTIMATION JUDGED BY AIR CRAFT IN AIR AT THAT TIME SOUND NONE EXHAUST TRAIL SEVERAL APPEARED TO HAVE A SILVERY TAIL PD ONE WEATHER BALLOON RELEASED IN MEMPHIS ON THE AFTER NOON OF SEVEN MAY AND THE LOCAL PAPER CARRIED A SMALL RELEASE ON THE SUBJECT NO FURTHER DETAILS R [redacted]

0816392.

UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET

AMACE-O
(8 May 1948)
1st Ind

HEADQUARTERS UNITED ARMY, Fort McPherson, Georgia, 11 May 1948

TO: Commanding, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio
ATTN: MCI

Forwarded with reference to our TWX, same subject, dated 8 May 1948.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

CORNELIUS A. [illegible]
Lt. Col., GSC
Actg AC of S, G-2

SECRET

[redacted]

CIC FIELD AREA OFFICE NO 1
POST OFFICE BOX 21
MEMPHIS 1, TENNESSEE

AJACI-452.1 General 8 May 1948

SUBJECT: Unconventional Aircraft.

TO: Commanding General, Third Army, Fort McPherson, Georgia
(ATTN: AC of S, G-2)

1. Information relative to the sighting of mysterious objects, possibly aircraft, at Memphis, Tenn., follows:

a. Location and time of sighting: Memphis, Tenn., 1500 to 1700, 7 May 1948.

b. Weather at the time: Visibility unlimited and unrestricted; winds: 330 to 340 degrees, 15 mph at surface increasing to 66 mph at 20,000 feet; Surface temperature, 72 degrees; dew point, 43 degrees; relative humidity, 40 percent.

c. Names, occupations and addresses of witnesses:

(1) Miss [redacted], housekeeper, [redacted], Memphis.
(2) Mr [redacted] salesman, [redacted], Memphis.
(3) Mrs [redacted], housewife, [redacted], Memphis.

d. Photographs: None.

e. Objects sighted:

(1) Number: 50 or 60.

(2) Shape: Unknown, possibly like a meteor.

(3) Size: Hard to determine, probably very small.

(4) Color: Shiny, like bright aluminum.

(5) Speed: Faster than any aircraft witnesses have ever seen

(6) Heading: Easterly.

[redacted]

[redacted]

(7) Maneuverability: Most objects travelled in straight line; some of them zig-zagged slightly.

(8) Altitude: Extremely high: Witnesses judged altitude by comparing with known types of conventional aircraft in the air at the time.

(9) Sound: None.

(10) Exhaust trail: Some objects seemed to have a silvery tail, which might have been exhaust.

f. These objects could not have been weather balloons because the Memphis weather bureau released only one balloon in the afternoon.

g. The undersigned is of the opinion that the objects seen were meteorites.

h. Evaluation of sub-paragraph e above; B-3

/s/ Victor L. Clark

VICTOR L. CLARK
Special Agent in Charge

Dist:
CO, Tenn. Mil. Dist.,
Nashville - 1
File - 1

[redacted]

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

Subject: Memphis Incident

AMC 1st Ind MCIAXC-3/RWS/Lw

Hq AMC, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio FEB 11 1949

TO: Research & Development Board, Technical Intelligence Branch. Rm 3E 636, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D. C. ATTN: Mr David E. Beckler

The inclosed letter and teletype copies comprise all information available at this Command concerning the incident of 7 May 1948 at Memphis, Tennessee.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

6 Incls
1 thru 4: n/c
Added 2 incls
5. Ltr to CG 3rd Army 8 May 48
6. Wire to CG Wright-Patterson AFB

H. M. McCOY
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Intelligence Department

Inclosures 2 & 4 not available for file

Operations Section File Cy - return showing date

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED [redacted]

NATIONAL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

2 February 1949

MEMORANDUM TO: Air Materiel Command
Intelligence Division
Wright Patterson Air Base
Dayton, Ohio
Attn: [redacted]

SUBJECT: Memphis Incident

1. It is requested that all pertinent details of the so-called "Memphis incident" of May 7, 1948, 2:00 to 5:00 P. M., be furnished the Research and Development Board for use by the RDB Committee on Geophysical and Geographical Sciences.

2. Attached hereto is correspondence from Dr. Lincoln LaPaz referring to the Memphis incident.

3. This information should be transmitted to the Research and Development Board, Technical Intelligence Branch, Room 3E 636, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D. C., Attn: Mr David Z. Beckler.

DAVID Z. BECKLER
Chief
Technical Intelligence Branch

Attachments:

Extracts from letter to Dr [redacted]
fromDr Lincoln LaPaz 1/12/49
Letter to Lt Col Rees from Dr LaPaz
1/6/49
Letter to Dr LaPaz from [redacted]
1/4/49
Letter to Lt Col Rees, from Dr LaPaz
12/30/48

UNCLASSIFIED [redacted]

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

Supplement to Trip Report to Memphis - 17 thru 19 May 1948

THRU: Col Clingerman WRC

TO: Col McCOY

1. The facts of the sighting on 7 May 1948 ~~in Memphis, Tennessee~~, as reported by teletype from Fort McPherson, Ga., were substantially corroborated in interviews with the witnesses, Mr and Mrs [redacted] and daughter and Miss [redacted]. The display was described essentially as small shiny starlike objects moving at high altitude in a straight line from West to East with the apparent velocity of shooting stars. Occasionally one would deviate from its course making sharp angular turns. They seemed to disappear in the distance rather than to burn out and disappear suddenly. The witnesses believed they had observed a meteor shower.

2. The Adjutant of the Reserve Training Base at Memphis Municipal Airport, 468 AFBU, was contacted. He promised to check with the large Millington Naval Base near Memphis to ascertain whether or not any naval aerial maneuvers had taken place on 7 May. This information will be reported to this Headquarters. He further stated that no unusual Air Force operations had taken place at that time.

3. This office contemplates contacting personnel of the Astronomy Department at the University of Dayton and also of the Observatory in Cincinnati to endeavor to determine whether or not a meteor shower would be visible to the naked eye during daylight hours and whether such a shower was reported on 7 May.

James C. Beam
JAMES C. BEAM
Lt Col, USAF
Project Officer
Technical Intel Div

1863

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

nci-39

MEMO

UNCLASSIFIED

Supplement II to Trip Report to Memphis, Tenn. - Visit with Dr. Paul Herget of the Observatory of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Attn: Mr. [redacted]:

1. This visit was made in an effort to ascertain the possibility and the probability of individuals to sight meteors during daylight hours with the unaided eye. Dr. Herget stated that such sighting was a very rare occurrence and when it did take place it almost invariably occurred in the afternoon with the observer looking toward the west. This time and position assured the most suitable conditions for observation because of the resultant light conditions and the relatively slow speed occasioned by both earth and meteor traveling in the same direction. The meteor would appear as a dark spot in the sky for a period of two to four seconds. Dr. Herget expressed serious doubt that the 50 or more objects observed 7 May 1948 in Memphis were meteors. He was unable, however, to offer any explanation as to a possible identification of the objects.

2. Dr. Herget suggested that Dr. Hynek at Ohio State University and Dr. Lincoln LaPaz of the University of New Mexico be contacted. The former is supposedly working on a project for the Air Force in an attempt to discover the possibility of photographing stars during daylight hours. The latter, according to Dr. Herget, is a recognized authority on meteors.

JAMES C. BEAM
Lt Col, USAF
Project Officer

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Subject: Memphis Incident

AMC 1st Ind MCIAC-3/HS3/mw

Hq AMC, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio

TO: Research & Development Board, Technical Intelligence Branch, Rm 3E 636, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D. C. ATTN: Mr David S. Beckler

The inclosed letter and teletype copies comprise all information available at this Command concerning the incident of 7 May 1948 at Memphis, Tennessee.

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Colonel, USAF
Chief, Intelligence Department

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

2 February 1949

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Intelligence Division
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Dayton, Ohio
Attn: W. R. Clingerman

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DAVID Z. BECKLER
Chief
Technical Intelligence Branch

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fromDr L ncoln LaPaz 1/12/49
Letter to Lt Col Rees from Dr LaPaz
1/6/49
Letter to Dr LaPaz from Richard Kruse
1/4/49
Letter to Lt Col Rees, from Dr LaPaz
12/30/48

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

[redacted]
Hicksville, N. Y.
Jan 4, 1949

Dr Lincoln LaPaz
Univ. New Mexico
Albuquerque, N. Mex.

Dear Sir,

During an Air Transport Command flight from Santa Maria, Azores, to Paris, in Jan., 1946, I witnessed the fall of a meteorite, an account of which I have often thought might be of interest to astronomers, and in particular, those of you more particularly concerned with the study of meteoritics. Until I read a recent issue of Science Illustrated I had not known to whom I might direct such a report.

Sitting in the cockpit of an airplane for hours at night a pilot sees many meteors fall; but on this night I saw one fall which I have not forgotten because of the unusual nature of the fall.

Our position was approximately midway between Brest and Paris; more exactly, I would estimate between 65 and 70 nautical miles due south of Cherbourg. As I recall now, the time was about 23:00 G. M. T. on Jan. 18, 1946. I was alone in the cockpit of a C-54 type plane at 7,000 ft. altitude, above broken clouds whose tops ranged between 4, 00 and 5,000 ft. The sky was crystal clear. We were flying in the direction of Paris.

The meteor first appeared to me at an altitude of about 35° above the horizon. It fell (apparently) from the north at an angle of perhaps 20° or 25° from the vertical. It did not explode. Its intense brilliance persisted until it met the horizon at a point bearing 85° to 90° true from our position. This would put its point of contact with the earth somewhere on a line between Brest and Kiev (roughly). A split second after disappearing at the horizon, the meteorite reappeared above the horizon, describing a tiny hyperbola of perhaps 1° altitude and fell again from sight. The reappearance of the meteorite was like a ricochet or rebound. The elapsed time of the fall and reappearance was perhaps 2 or 3 seconds.

My log book also shows night flights over this route on Feb 12, '46, March 22, '46; and May 19, '46; but I feel about 95° certain that the incident occurred on the night of January 18th., 1946. Otherwise the account is accurate to the best of my knowledge and memory.

I should be interested to hear if you have knowledge of a meteorite having fallen at the time and in a location which may fit the account I have given. Also, please let me know if I may be of further service to the Institute of Meteoritics.

Yours truly,

[redacted]

(See attached comments by Dr Lincoln LaPaz, Director, Institute of Meteoritics, Univ. of N. M.

EXTRACTS
FROM
Letter Directed to Dr H. E. Landsberg
from

Dr Lincoln LaPaz, Director
Institute of Meterotics
University of New Mexico
January 12, 1949

In my opinion, [redacted] observation (which, as the first paragraph of his letter indicates, reached me only through his chance reading of my article in Science Illustrated) is of the utmost significance. What he observed was certainly not a "bouncing meteroite." A much more reasonable interpretation of his observation is that he saw a luminous object following a wave-like path (somewhat analogous to the real path of the Los Alamos fireball of 1948, December 20 8^h 54^m PM), the point from which [redacted] observed being situated very nearly in the plane of the trajectory of the luminous object and the direction of motion of this object being almost directly away from [redacted], so that the observed angular altitude of the first crest on the wave-like path was quite large (at least 13°) while the observed angular altitude for the second, more distant, crest was only about 1°.

In view of the fact that [redacted]s important observation came to attention only by accident, it seems to me that immediate steps should be taken to interrogate all former and present ATC pilots (especially all pilots now flying in Germany or elsewhere in Europe) in order to determine whether additional observations similar to that made by [redacted]have been made. Would it not be possible to require all pilots and co-pilots to report in detail on any fire-balls they may observe which they have any reason to believe are definitely or possibly non-meteoritic?

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Sitting in the cockpit of an airplane for hours at night a pilot sees many meteors fall; but on this night I saw one fall which I have not forgotten because of the unusual nature of the fall.

Our position was approximately midway between Brest and Paris; more exactly, I would estimate between 65 and 70 nautical miles due south of Cherbourg. As I recall now, the time was about 23:00 G. M. T. on Jan. 18, 1946. I was alone in the cockpit of a C-54 type plane at 7,000 ft. altitude, above broken clouds whose tops ranged between 4,000 and 5,000 ft. The sky was crystal clear. We were flying in the direction of Paris.

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Yours truly,

/s/ [redacted]

(See attached comments by Dr Lincoln LaPaz, Director, Institute of Meteoritics, Univ. of N. M.

Dr HYNEK'S EVALUATIONS EXTRACTED FROM PROJECT GRUDGE REPORT.

INCIDENT INDEX

1. Astronomical

a. High probability:
#26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 48, 49, 59, 60, 66, 69, 70, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 104, 116, 119, 132, 136, 140, 147, 148, 158, 174, 184, 185, 187, 197, 203, 204, 208, 216, 219, 238.

b. Fair or low probability:
#19, 20, 23, 24, 28, 35, 36, 46, 50, 63, 67, 80, 82, 93, 100, 112, 120, 121, 129, 130, 144, 153, 165, 166, 167, 175, 192, 199, 202, 205, 220, 230, 240.

2. Non-astronomical but suggestive of other explanations

a. Balloons or ordinary aircraft:
#3, 11, 22, 41, 42, 53, 54, 73, 81, 83, 91, 92, 113, 114, 115, 126, 131, 138, 141, 145, 155, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 163, 169, 171, 173, 178, 180, 182, 188, 190, 194, 195, 196, 198, 200, 201, 209, 210, 217, 222, 235, 237, 239.

b. Rockets, flares or falling bodies:
#4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25, 56, 65, 78, 106, 107, 108, 109, 133, 170, 211, 218.

c. Miscellaneous (reflections, auroral streamers, birds, etc.):
#39, 89, 123, 124, 128, 146, 164, 181, 189, 214, 221, 231, 234.

3. Non-astronomical, with no explanation evident

a. Lack of evidence precludes explanation:
#38, 44, 45, 47, 55, 57, 72, 86, 87, 88, 90, 99, 110, 117, 118, 125, 127, 137, 139, 149, 150, 177, 179, 191, 206, 212, 213, 229, 232, 233.

b. Evidence offered suggests no explanation:
#1, 2, 10, 17, 21, 29, 37, 40, 51, 52, 58, 61, 62, 64, 68, 71, 75, 76, 77, 79, 84, 105, 111, 122, 135, 151, 152, 154, 162, 168, 172, 176, 183, 186, 193, 207, 215, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 236, 241, 242, 243, 244, 134.