Incident # 141

ATIC NO. ---

AF NO. ---

SERIAL NO. ---

DATE OF EVENT ---

TIME OF EVENT (Z) 1125 to 1127

MAP: Changing (Sketch)

SIZE: 3000 ft. Diameter (Approximately)

COURSE: Stationary

NO. IN GROUP 1 Broke into 300-350

SOURCE ---

PHOTOS --- SKETCHES (1)

DATE OF REPORT 30 June 1946

LOCATION Hecla, S.D.

SOURCE Chem. Eng. & Amateur Astronomer

DATE IN TO AFIC ---

COLOR Like polished Aluminum

SHAPE Hovering

ALTITUDE 150 Miles (?)

LENGTH OF TRAIL (IF ANY) Slightly over 2 Hr

TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground

REMARKS Hovered then disintegrated

BALLOON JAH

Temporary ATIC Form 329
(2 Jan 52)

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #141 -- Hecla, South Dakota -- 30 June 1948

The description given here obviously does not answer to that of a star, or of any other astronomical body.

In all probability the object was a cluster of balloons, carrying, perhaps, cosmic ray apparatus. This would account for the starlike appearance and the eventual breaking up into parts.

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

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.

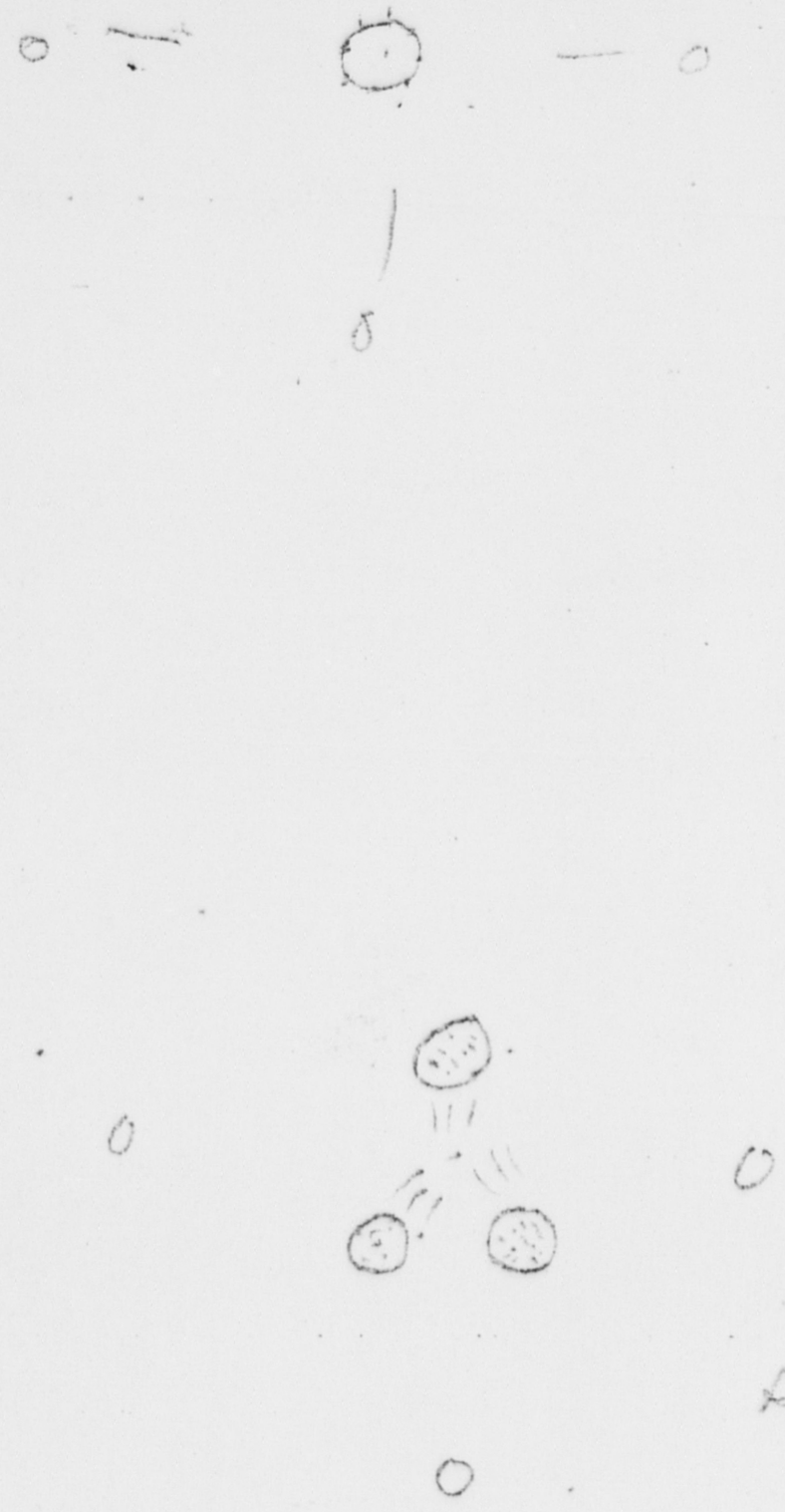
c. Miscellaneous (reflections, auroral streamers, birds, etc.):
#39, 89, 123, 124, 128, 146, 164, 181, 189, 214, 221, 231, 234.

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, 163, 172, 176, 183, 186, 193, 207, 215, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 236, 241, 242, 243, 244, 134.

slow change in shape. A large chunk fell of . Within the next 2-1/2 minutes the entire spot started to very slowly disintegrate. Three larger parts moved away out from the mass and formed a perfect isometric triangle, the remaining parts continued to move apart holding their related positions of a perfect triangle but gradually getting smaller and fainter until they dissappeared some 9 minutes after the initial break-up. It could easily be seen that the parts were moving away from the earth.



CHECK-LIST - UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Incident # 141

1. Date 30 Jun 48
2. Time 11:25 to 1327 and shortly thereafter
3. Location Hecla, S. D.
4. Name of observer [redacted] and [redacted]
5. Occupation of observer Chemical Engineer - Amateur Astronomer
6. Address of observer Hecla, S. D.
7. Place of observation Between Watertown, S. D. & Webster, S. D. on highway #81 and #12 US
8. Number of objects one (1) when broken up 300-350 ([redacted] 300 ([redacted]
9. Distance of object from observer 20 miles to 0 miles to 20 miles
10. Time in sight Slightly over two hours
11. Altitude 150 miles (?)
12. Speed Stationary (hovering)
13. Direction of flight Stationary
14. Tactics Remained in one approximate position then disintegrated (hovered). Appeared to enlarge then fade out.
15. Soumd None
16. Size Original bodies approx. 3000 feet diameter.
17. Color Like polished aluminum
18. Shape Changing Note sketch.
19. Odor detected None
20. Apparent construction Seemed to be a cluster of parts
21. Exhaust trails Particles of disintegrating mass left very faint trails of vapor.
22. Weather conditions Brilliantly clear (CAVU) - Wind velocity 3 MPH
23. Effect on clouds No clouds
24. Sketches or photographs Map showing locations of sightings
25. Manner of disappearance Disintegrated into smaller pieces
26. Remarks: Object appeared as cluster of parts which remained fairly stationary and constant for some two hours when it underwent a rather

[redacted]

Hecla, South Dakota 7-4-48

Commander 2nd
Coast Guard District
Old Custom House
8th & Olive
St. Louis 1, Mo.

Attn: Intelligence Officer

Dear Sir:

I am submitting this information to you in the belief that it may be of value to this country's information. I just talked by phone to: Caretaker, Mr. [redacted] of Coast Guard Station, H. F. B. F., near Groton, S. D. He advised me to write to you. I gave him a very limited account of what I observed, because I did not know for sure, whether this information might prove confidential.

I have been living in Cleveland, Ohio, for the past 3 years. My home which I was returning to, is Hecla, South Dakota, where I now am. The observation was made on June 30, 1948, between Watertown, S. D., and Webster, S. D. I was traveling on Highway #81, from Watertown, to Webster (see inclosed small map) At arrow #1, I stopped the car to watch a small plane. I noticed a small (round) spot in the sky, looking to the north it was 20° to the right and about 20° to north of azimuth. (Nearly overhead). I thought at first it was an aluminum covered plane, very high. I watched it for a 4 minutes and noted no movement. My next conclusion was that it might be a star. We continued driving north stopping at about 5-10 minute intervals and again looking (my wife watched it out the side window constantly) At arrow #2 I stopped and walked down to the ditch and lined it up with a telephone wire and watched very carefully for any movement for 6 minutes. No movement detected, I decided it must be a bright star (Venus or Sirus) neither should have been at that spot at that time, and I had never seen a star at noon. I made two more stops at arrow #3 and #4. Position was the same. At arrow #5 I stopped for gas and water (I was pulling a 6,000# trailer and the car was over heating). I called attention to the object to the proprietor and three customers (place - Arnold's Store) I made no comment but waited for their deductions -

Proprietor: Star
1st Customer: Star
2nd Customer: Can't be a star - impossible
3rd Customer - Never saw anything like that

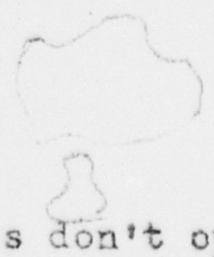
They were all looking when I left and a little scared.

This territory is very thinly populated and these people are my only witnesses.

We continued north (making innumerable observations at a few minute intervals. No change in appearance or position was noted, except it appeared to be a cluster of parts or pieces instead of one solid piece:

thus:

The next stop of importance was at arrow #6 on Highway #12. The location was nearly exactly the same, a couple of degrees closer to overhead if anything. It was slightly smaller and its shape was not constant. It appeared to very slowly change from to . We were just about to

get into the car when my wife said: "Look, a piece fell off."  I

would have sworn at that moment it was a parachute. (Parachutes don't operate 50 to 150 miles altitude). In the next 2-1/2 minutes the entire spot started to very slowly disintegrate. Three larger parts moved away out from the mass and formed a perfect isometric triangle, the remaining mass slowly moved into hundreds of small parts, seemingly leaving very faint trails of vapor. At this point the height was very apparent - 50 to 150 miles The smaller parts slowly dissappeared as if moving outward, that is, directly away from the observer. The three remaining parts continued to move apart and hold their constant position of a perfect triangle, gradually getting smaller and fainter until they dissappeared about 9 minutes after the initial break up. It could easily be seen that the parts were moving away from the earth. No other sight of the object was had - after this at arrow #6. My convictions at this point were that it could not be anything terrestial.

The day was brilliantly clear, no cloud or haze visible above the horizon. Wind velocity about 3 MPH in direction shown on map.

Times are shown below for different arrow locations at stopping time:

#1 - 11: 25 A. M.
2 - 11:31
3 - 11:47
4 - 11:53
5 - 12:02 PM
6 - 1:27 PM

Colour and irridiscence comparable to polished aluminum

I may be able to give more details if wanted. I know about the new large plastic balloons for weather or cosmic ray observation. It could not have been one.

I am a chemical engineer and have been an amateur astronomer for years, so please don't take this as a crackpot's story. I'm in dead ernest and will swear to these statements.

Very sincerely yours,

/s/ [redacted]

CG-64
Comdr 2nd CG District (dli)

7 July 1948

Mr. [redacted]r
Hecla, South Dakota

Dear Sir:

This will serve to acknowledge receipt of, and to express appreciation for, the very comprehensive and interesting report on the unusual atmospheric phenomenon observed by you, together with your wife and several other persms, on June 30, 1948, while traveling, by car, on Route 81, between specified points in South Dakota.

Your original letter and attached map section are being forwarded this date, to the proper authority in Washington, D. C., and, no doubt, you will be communicated with directly by such authority should additional information be desired.

By direction of the Commander, Second Coast Guard, District.

Very truly yours,

R. G. WILLOH
Capt, U. S.Coast Guard Reserve
Chf, Legal & Intelligence Section
Second Coast Guard District

CG-64

Comdr. 2nd CG District (dli)

7 July 1948

From: Commander, Second Coast Guard District (dli)

To: Commandant (INT)

Subj: Unusual Atmospheric Phenomenon; report of

In conformity with the provisions of paragraph 2 of Intelligence & Law Enforcement Circular No. 1-48, there is forwarded herewith for Headquarters evaluation for transmission to the Department of the Air Force, a letter received this date, from a Mr. [redacted], Hecla, South Dakota, describing an unusual atmospheric phenomenon observed by him, together with his wife and several other persons, on 30 June, 1948, while traveling, by car, on Route 81, between Watertown and Webster, South Dakota.

R. G. WILLOH
by direction

Incls:
1. Letter from [redacted], dated

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Address reply to:
Commandant
U. S. Coast Guard
Headquarters
Washington 25, D. C.

13 July 1948
File: INT 64 (H)

From: Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard
TO: Commanding General, Headquarters Air Materiel Command, U. S. Air Force, Wright Fiedd, Dayton, Ohio

Subj: Aerial Phenomena between Watertown and Webster, South Dakota

1. There is forwarded for your action a report from Mr. [redacted] dated 4 July, 1948, addressed to the Commander, 2nd Coast Guard District, St. Louis, Mo., describing an unusual atmospheric phenomena observed by him on 30 June, 1948 while traveling by car on Route 81, between Watertown and Webster, South Dakota.

2. There is also inclosed a copy of a letter from the Commander, 2nd Coast Guard District, to Mr [redacted] dated 7 July, 1948, acknowledging receipt of Mr [redacted] report.

By direction of the Commandant.

S. Y HAMMOND
LCDR, USCG
Chief, Intelligence
& Law Enforcement Division

Incls:
1. Report from Mr. [redacted]
2. Copy ltr Cdr. 2CGD, to [redacted]

[redacted]

ASC-251-D
(15-10-43)

A. G. P.	
PRIORITY	
ROUTINE	X
MULTIPLE ADDRESS	

TELETYPE MESSAGE

AIR SERVICE COMMAND TELETYPE NETWORK

MCIAXO-3/GHH/aw

FROM: AMC

DATE: 20 July 1948

W. R. CLINGERMAN, USAF
Chief, Technical Intelligence Div
Intelligence Department
NAME, RANK AND TITLE OF AUTHENTICATING OFFICER

TO: Mr. [redacted]
Hecla, South Dakota

CLASS:

TELETYPE NO.

MCIAXO-7-3. PLEASE WIRE GOVERNMENT COLLECT IF 24 JULY WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR INTERVIEW. DIRECT REPLY TO TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, HQ., AMC, WRIGHT-PATTERSON AF BASE, ATTN: MCIAXO-3.

Incident [redacted]

COORDINATION

C. G. OR C. O.	CONTROL OFFICE	MAINTENANCE	P. G. T.	SUPPLY	BUDGET & FISCAL	OTHERS

Interrogation Report
MCIAXO-3 MCIAXO-4 27 Jul 48

1. Capt M. Martin, Lt C. R. Glasebrook, and Lt. T. S. Byington of the Air Technical Intelligence Branch, Operations Section, Technical Intelligence Division, departed Patterson Field 0810, 24 Jul 1948. Arrived Bismarck, North Dakota, 1420 the same day. Contacted Mr. [redacted]s home by telephone and were informed that Mr. [redacted]e would not be available until approximately 1630.

2. Arrived at Mr. [redacted] home at approximately 1630. Conferred with Mr. [redacted]e for approximately two (2) hours attempting to acquire all available information. Mr. [redacted] seemed sincere in his statements, however, he took quite some time to answer specific questions. He answered questions with generalities. It is believed he tried to give correct answers but was unsure of himself. He also stated that most of the answers given in his letter to the Technical Intelligence Division were more specific and that he believed he chose his words with considerable care towards accuracy.

3. Departed Bismarck, North Dakota, 1230, 25 Jul 1948. Arrived Aberdeen, South Dakota, 1520, 25 Jul 1948. Contacted Mr. [redacted] home at approximately 1630 by telephone. At that time his mother informed us that he was out of town and would return at approximately 1930. Mr. [redacted]r called back at about 2000 and arrangements were made to visit with him the following day.

4. Arrangements were made for transportation to Hecla, South Dakota. Mr. [redacted]r and his wife were contacted at approximately 1145, on the 26th of Jul 1948. We conferred with Mr. [redacted] alone for approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. We conferred with Mrs. [redacted] for approximately twenty-five minutes. We then conferred with Mr. and Mrs. [redacted] for approximately thirty minutes. Mr. and Mrs. [redacted] seemed sincere in their answers and showed a willingness to help. They attempted to answer our questions to the best of their ability. Mr. [redacted] seemed to have a background which would qualify him as a fairly reliable observer of the incident. Mrs. [redacted] kept a constant watch on the object while Mr. Pfutzenreuter was driving. Several stops were made and their curiosities were so aroused that they watched the object with intense interest. It is believed that the intense interest of the two witnesses makes their observations fairly reliable.

5. Departed Aberdeen, South Dakota, 1630 on 26 Jul 1948. Arrived Patterson Field 2200, 26 Jul 1948.

Metho Martin

METHO MARTIN
Captain, USAF
ATI Branch
Operations Section

Description of object as stated by Mr. [redacted]

First sighting was at approximately 1125 on 30 June 1948. The object was thought to be a star. Being an amateur astronomer, it aroused the curiosity of Mr. [redacted]. There was no concrete shape to the object. It had a round appearance but was not sharply enough defined to positively state that the object was round. Upon observing the object for a short while, it appeared to change its shape having a tendency to flatten out in spots and then return to a round shape again. There was no definite pattern, time, or cycle to the change of shape of the object. The appearance indicated that it was a formation attempting to retain a circular shape. The main tendency was toward roundness. The witness could not state whether or not the object had depth to it.

The object was viewed for approximately two hours. During that period of time the witness moved approximately 22 miles due north and then to a point approximately 13 miles west at an approximate 90° angle to the original direction of travel. The object retained an apparent constant position. At first sighting the object appeared at a compass heading of approximately 5°. At the last sighting the compass heading was approximately 65°. The vertical angle of sight remained constant at about 75° to 80°. Due to the position of the object and estimations, the witness decided that the altitude of the object would be approximately 50 miles. The times and locations of the various sightings are as shown in the original correspondence and map. Mr. [redacted] stated that the times and positions originally listed were correct. [redacted] readings were checked against his wife's watch which was checked with radio time signals after the sightings, and found to be correct.

There was no change in appearance of the object except for an increase in size, until the last sighting at 1327 when the object started to break up. The object had a definite polished aluminum color and showed no dark or bright spots. There were no trails of any sort apparent prior to break up. The estimated diameter of the original was thought to be approximately 2000 to 3000 feet. Just prior to the breaking up of the mass, it took on a fuzzy appearance resembling a large cluster of golf balls in a round group. The mass seemed to take on a box shape. Suddenly one ball about 1/12th the size of the original mass dropped from the center of the mass to a distance about 10 times the original diameter of the mass and hung in space. Immediately two balls of the same size as the first moved out of the sides of the mass, accelerated rapidly and came to a quick stop when they reached a distance from the center of the mass equal to the first. The large balls formed an inverted isometric triangle with the first ball at the apex. There were slight whitish trails visible from the three while assuming their new positions. Shortly thereafter the larger remaining mass tended to break up into equal thirds with the lower sections going downward and the upper section going up forming an upright triangle. During the breaking up of the central mass, a whitish haze was apparent towards the center of the triangle from each of the moving thirds. Each third appeared to have over 100 spheres which appeared to be the size of aluminum specks. It took approximately 25 to

30 seconds for the central mass to take on its new configuration after the three larger balls took up their new positions. The color of the spheres remained a polished aluminum. Trails were apparent only during the break up period. The small spheres appeared to be of two definite sizes, very small and fine specks. The smaller of the small spheres appeared to be approximately 1/10th the size of the large spheres. The other spheres were approximately 1/5th to 1/4th the size of the large spheres. No estimate of ratio between the numbers of the two sizes of small spheres could be made.

Upon assuming this new configuration, the complete mass began to recede from view. The small particles became invisible after one or two minutes. The three larger balls did not seem to start to recede until after the smaller ones were no longer visible. It took about four minutes for the three to disappear after the smaller ones were no longer visible. There was no explosion. There just seemed to be a receding out of sight with the large balls retaining their isometric triangle positions.

The following statements by Mrs. [redacted] were not in accord with Mr. [redacted]. Except for the following variations, the statements and descriptions of the witnesses were almost identical.

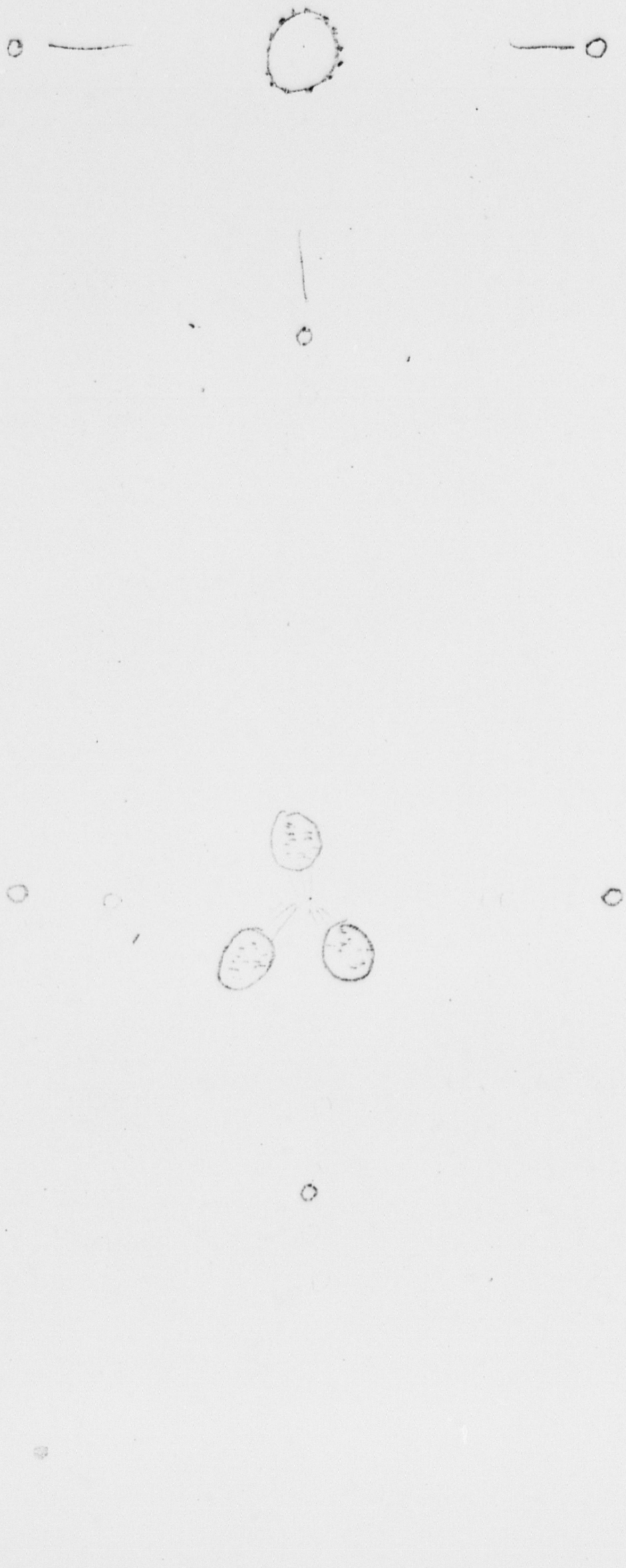
1. The original mass varied from round to oblong with the distortion not being in any specific direction. The color was described as a polished aluminum with the light shimmering on it similar to the effect of sun shimmering on aluminum aircraft.

2. The original size of the mass was about the size of a star. Prior to break-up, the mass had assumed a size 15 to 20 times larger than the original size. The relative size just prior to break up of the mass was compared to the size of a hard ball being caught by the first baseman as viewed from the third base position.

3. The first impression of the ball's dropping from the center of the mass was similar to a parachute coming out, however, it did not take on a parasol shape but assumed a ball shape. The three balls moving away from the mass moved very rapidly and came to a sudden stop when they reached their new positions. There were no trails apparent. After the break up, the balls appeared to have a more whitish appearance with less glare or shimmer. The color was described as being a very bright white. The comparison of the large balls to the small ones was stated as a comparison of a baseball (hardball) and a dime as viewed at a distance. Mrs. [redacted] believed that the small balls were all of the same size. Mrs. [redacted] did not recall any trail except a foggy haze behind the small balls during their break up. When the small balls were lost from view, a foggy haze was seen at their previous position. This haze had dissipated before the large balls had receded from sight.

Metro Martin

METRO MARTIN
Captain, USAF
AFI Branch
Operations Section



First part of break up

Break up completed.

15
16
17
18
DAKOTA
To Brampton
To Havana
To Lidgerwood
To Wahpeton
White Rock
Marlowe
Veble
Dahlberg
Claire City
New Effington
Victor
Roshold
Hammer
Hillhead
Newark
Kidder
Burch
BRITTON
MARSHALL
ROBERTS
Lake City
SISSETON
Amherst
Spain
Langford
Eden
Peever
To Browns Valley
Pierpont
Roslyn
Grenville
Spring Grove
DAY
Dover
Holmquist
Bristol
WEBSTER
Summit
Marvin
Big Stone City
To Ortonville
Allmot
Hartford Beach
Corona
Sutter
Lily
Crandall
Crocker
Bradley
Wallace
Florence
Stockholm
South Shore
Strandburg
Troy
Waverly
Lake Kampeska
Garden City
CODINGTON
WATERTOWN
Kranzburg
Goodwin
Altamont
Moritz
Lake Norden
CLARK
CLARK
Elrod
Henry
Naples
Bemis
DEUEL
Clear Lake
Gary
Manning
HAYTI
Carpenter
Willow Lake
Bryant
Lake Norden
Stone Bridge Lakes
Estelline
Toronto
Johnsonville
Astoria
Pelican Lake
Lake Poinsett
Lake Albert
Lake Pelican
Lake Traverse
Lake Hendricks
Lake Benton
Lake Preston
Lake Thompson
Lake Henry
Lake Kampeska
Lake Norden