

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 19 Feb 58		2. LOCATION Topeka, Kansas		12. CONCLUSIONS ☐ Was Balloon ☐ Probably Balloon ☐ Possibly Balloon ☐ Was Aircraft ☐ Probably Aircraft ☐ Possibly Aircraft ☐ Was Astronomical ☐ Probably Astronomical ☐ Possibly Astronomical ☐ Other _____ ☒ Insufficient Data for Evaluation ☐ Unknown	
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local _____ GMT 19/2200Z		4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION ☒ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar ☐ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar			
5. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No		6. SOURCE Military			
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 1-2 secs		8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS one		9. COURSE downward	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING Comet-like falling obj, orange flame, size of dime. Appeared to have tail four times diameter of obj. Appeared to disintegrate.				11. COMMENTS Probably accidental release of some obj fm a/c. Possible daylight meteor, possible burst of WX balloon. Obj evaluated as no threat. Case considered insufficient data.	

QNH004V SQC102 YMB084 WYC064 WDA068FBA042

RR RJEDDN RJEDKF RJEDSQ RJEPHQ

ZEL

FBAC09

RR RJEDDN RJEDKF RJEDSQ RJEPHQ

DE RJWFFB 2

R 200145Z

8 III

FM COMDRADIV21

TO RJEDDN/COMDR ADG ENT

INFO RJEDKF/COMDR 20 AIRDIV

ZEN/CINCSAC

RJEDSQ/COMDR ATIC

RJEPHQ/DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE HEDUSAF

BT

UNCLAS/98DOI 0976. UFOB. 1. A. COMETK-LIKE FALLING OBJECT.

B. DIME. C. ORANGE FLAME. D. ONE. F. N/A. G. APPEARED TO

HAVE TAIL FOUR TIMES DIAMETER OF OBJECT. H. NONE. I. NONE. 2A.

FLASH OF ITS LIGHT. B. 30 DEGREES ABOVE HORIZON, DUE NORTH. C.

25 DEGREES ABOVE HORIZON, DUE NORTH. D. STRAIGHT DOWN, VERY HIGH

SPEED. E. APPEARED TO DISINTEGRATE. F. ONE TO TWO SECONDS.

3A. GROUND VISUAL. B. NONE. C. N/A. D. 19 FEB 1958, 2200Z.

E. DAYLIGHT. 5. 3858 NORTH 9540 WEST BASE OPERATIONS FORBES AIR

FORCE BASE KANSAS. 6A. [REDACTED], TOPEKA, KANSAS.

7. [REDACTED] MAJOR, USAF, 90TH STRAT RECON WING (M),

4E4
34X22
GK

Red Clues !

note

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FORBES AIR FORCE BASE, KANSAS. SQUADRON OPERATIONS OFFICER, HIGHLY RELIABLE. 7A. 13,000 BROKEN, VISIBILITY: GOOD. B. SURFACE 090/04; 6M 310/15; 10M 330/30; 16M 320/45; 20M 330/60; 30M 340/80; 50M 330/55. C. ESTIMATED 8,000 BROKEN, HIGHER BROKEN, 15 MILES VISIBILITY. E. SIX TENTHS TO EIGHT-TENTHS. F. NONE. 8 AND 9: NONE. 10. UNKNOWN. 11. CHIEF, INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, 90TH STRAT RECON WING.

A SIMULTANEOUS REPORT SIGHTING OF AN OBJECT FALLING FROM AN AIRCRAFT DIRECTLY OVER THE CITY OF TOPEKA KANSAS WAS REPORTED TO THE CONTROL TOWER OF PHILLIP BILLARD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, TOPEKA, KANSAS BY A CIVILIAN AS NOTED IN 6(A). CIVILIAN OBSERVER STATED OBJECT WAS OBSERVED FOR 15 SECONDS WHILE DRIVING CAR IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION AND THAT OBJECT APPEARED TO BE FALLING STRAIGHT DOWN. MAJOR [REDACTED] POINT OF OBSERVATION WAS 8 MILES SOUTH OF CIVILIAN POINT OF OBSERVATION. NO POSSIBLE CAUSE OF THIS SIGHTING HAS BEEN CONFIRMED. MAJOR [REDACTED] HAS OFFERED THE POSSIBILITY OF A TIPTANK OR DOOR LOST FROM A HIGH ALTITUDE AIRCRAFT. A CHECK WITH ARTC, KANSAS CITY, MO. REPORTS NO AIRCRAFT IN AREA ON THEIR BOARD AT THE TIME. UNABLE TO CHECK ALL LOCAL MILITARY FLIGHTS . 12. NONE.

BT

20/2224Z FEB RJWFFB

Note: Sky almost fully clear and blue. This often produces some illusory effects.

offer an explanation only if necessary

Accidental release of some object? Daylight fireball

More likely - accidental release

Sgt. Holman: See Dr. Oliver's report 102 Feb "daylight bolide" Mr. [unclear]

G.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY

SECTION OF UPPER ATMOSPHERE STUDIES
1GY OPTICAL SATELLITE TRACKING PROGRAM
60 GARDEN STREET
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

May 23, 1958

Captain George T. Gregory
Hqtrs, Air Technical Intelligence Center
Box 9307
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

Dear Captain:

I now have had a chance to look through all the reports you sent, and the one concerning the "satellite-type sighting" from Denver interests me very much and I am giving it the full treatment. It is clear that this could not have been any of the American satellites, not only because of the excessive brightness, but because no American satellite at present could be seen approaching from the northwest at the latitude of Denver. On April 30th there were no known Russian Sputnik's up, but even had there been it is almost inconceivable that objects that bright would escape detection by our Moonwatch teams. This is a corker; so much so, that I wish I had the time and the opportunity to talk with these two officers. It could be that in casual conversation some clue might be obtained which is not apparent in their report.

I had an experience the other night which may bear on this. I had been instructing my young daughter in figuring sidereal time, and we had gone out on the lawn to check our calculations when there came along a sputnik-like object---correct brightness, correct speed, correct color, and I almost stood agnast. There was no sound. A few minutes later another such object came through in another direction, and then a few minutes still another. On the third one I was able to detect over ambient noises the sound of jet motors. Lights were not blinking. If the other object had not gone through I might honestly be puzzled to this day as to whether I had seen an unknown satellite. I didn't know that jets ever carried such lights.

It is almost inconceivable two such experienced officers could have made the mistake I had first made, but strange things do happen. In the meantime, I am having this observation checked against all other "unknown sputnik's" that our teams from time to time reported.

As to the other cases, which I am returning (I will return the Denver case very soon), we certainly seem to have a fine bunch of meteor observations--five of them. Two others remain: one, the object that was seen the same time on two nights just before sunrise

(period of morning twilight had already begun). Vega was, as you say, near the point of sighting but it seems to me that it was somewhat higher than 600. There was of course a very fine spectacular object in the sky at that time but, unfortunately, in the southeastern sky. The planet Venus was at its brightest in the pre-sunrise sky, and I know from past experience how easily it can be mistaken for an unknown object. My only reaction is to question the stated position and to consider the possibility that it was Venus.

The case of the "daylight meteor" is greatly ambiguous. While a daylight fireball cannot be ruled out, I would myself favor the accidental release of some object from an aircraft. However, much hinges on the statement "orange flame". If it really was flaming then it looks as though we must accredit this to a daylight meteor. If the light was simply a bright reflection of sunlight, then we have the other possibility. In either case, there is nothing hostile, and I say to this "insufficient information to be able to distinguish between daylight meteor or object falling from aircraft". I don't think it is worthwhile to pursue this one, although I think if I could talk to the chap a better analysis might be made. It just occurs to me that perhaps the object might have been a burst weather or cosmic ray balloon, with the reflection from the trailing material accounting for the "tail four times the diameter of object". In fact, I think this is a distinct possibility since it occurred in the neighborhood of the municipal airport from which, I suppose, balloons are launched. The time of observation was 4:00 p.m., their time which, I believe, is about the time of such launchings. So, three possibilities: daylight meteor---part of aircraft---burst balloon. All harmless but, I now tend to prefer the latter.

I am looking forward to visiting you in your new quarters---I hope in early June.

Cheers,

J. Allen Hynek

JAH:lc

Encls.