

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 22 Jan 51		2. LOCATION 50 mi SE of Holloman AFB N.M.		12. CONCLUSIONS ☐ Was Balloon ☐ Probably Balloon ☐ Possibly Balloon ☐ Was Aircraft ☐ Probably Aircraft ☐ Possibly Aircraft ☐ Was Astronomical ☐ Probably Astronomical ☐ Possibly Astronomical ☒ Other Gas from balloon. ☐ Insufficient Data for Evaluation ☐ Unknown	
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local _____ GMT 22/1800Z		4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION ☐ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar ☒ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar			
5. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No		6. SOURCE Project Gopher Observers			
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 3 min		8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS one		9. COURSE	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING Object observed from C-47 that was tracking a Gopher Balloon. First appeared to be star-like. the object held a constant position next to the balloon where it seemed to take shape and increase in size until it was 1/4 to 1/2 the size of the balloon. Then it detached and traveled in level flight at high speed, emitting orange sparks. The C-47 was at 11,000' and the balloon at 70-100,000'. Shape was circular. Color. Milky white. Speed. Hover to high.				11. COMMENTS White object observed in conjunction with balloon. Balloon scheduled for 4 hr flight. Descended shortly after observation of object. Most probable cause was gas leaking from balloon. Flash attributed to disappearance and/or explosion of leaking gas. Color attributed to altitude and temperature of escaping gas.	

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INCIDENT 22 JANUARY 1951,
HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE

On 22 January 1951 while participating in Project Gopher at Holloman AFB, New Mexico, we took off at about 0900 E and proceeded to the balloon launching site at 10,000 ft MSL where we started tracking a balloon.

The balloon was set to maintain a 100,000 ft altitude for a period of about four hours. After tracking the balloon for about one hour on a southeast course and at a point about 50 miles southeast of Holloman AFB, a tiny star-like object appeared next to the balloon. At this time Captain Spradley of Photo Lab and Mr. McAleese of General Mills Corporation were notified.

The object held a constant position next to the balloon and appeared to be increasing in size. At this time its round shape and clear outline became more visible. After leaving the cockpit and observing the object from the astradome, the object started separating from the balloon in a westward direction. At this time the object was about one-fourth to one-half the size of the balloon. The object now appeared to be traveling in level flight at a very high speed. After about one minute it emitted a series of brilliant flashes of light at one-second intervals and disappeared from sight.

Holloman Tower was called to verify if any other aircraft were in the area and when informed of the object, there was no reply.

The incident was reported to the project chief at Holloman AFB and on his suggestion, Major Kodis of Electronics Sub-Division was also contacted.

James E. Cocker
JAMES E. COCKER
Captain, USAF

27 November 1951

7-3712-34
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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

AMC MATERIEL 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 Sighting of an Unknown Object

TO ATIAA-2C
ATTN: Lt Ruppert

FROM WCEFE-5

DATE

COMMENT NO. 1

Capt. Spradley/mah
27159/Bldg 17

1. The following information is submitted per request from Lt Ruppert.

On 22 January 1951 the undersigned, [REDACTED], and Mr. [REDACTED] project engineer for General Mills Corp. were tracking a balloon on Project Gopher. We had taken off from Holloman A.F.B., New Mexico in a C-47 type aircraft at 0900 EST. We pick up our balloon shortly thereafter and were tracking it in an easterly direction. About half way between Holloman and Salt Flat Texas, we noticed an object near our balloon. The balloon was at 70 thousand plus feet and we were flying at approximately 11 thousand feet.

The object was above and to the side of our balloon. How far above and to the side cannot be said because there was no reference. The object was about the size of the balloon. It was flat and round. The balloon was pear shaped. The object was a milky color.

As long as I saw the object, which was approximately 3 minutes, it maintained its position in relation to the balloon. We flew under the balloon and lost sight of it. [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED] went back to the astro-dome position and watched it from there. They said that the object descended to the balloon and then after several bright flashes disappeared to the west.

A short time thereafter our balloon started to descend and landed near Salt Flat Texas.

After landing at Holloman, we made a verbal report to the officials there.

Ernest W. Spradley
ERNEST W. SPRADLEY
Captain, USAF

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Dayton Daily News
9 Feb 51

Saucer Visiting Balloon? 2 Field Pilots Not Sure

Airmen Sight Object While On Mission
In New Mexico; AMC Officials Silent

Two Wright Field officers added another chapter to the "Flying Saucer story" last night.

Capt. J. E. Cocker, of the All-Weather Flying Division, and Capt. E. W. Spradley, of the Aerial Photographic laboratory, claimed they "saw a strange object" in the sky while on a test mission recently.

They said they were flying in a C-47 at about 12,000 feet near Alamogordo, N. M. Their plane had taken off from Holloman Air Force base to track a large balloon sent up to take weather observations. The balloon was similar to the type used in "Project Skyhook" disclosed this week by the Navy.

Captain Spradley described it:

"We were following the balloon when I noticed a strange object in the sky. It was flat and looked like a dime. It was a milky color. It wasn't doing anything, just hovering there near the balloon."

Higher Altitude

The object and the balloon were at a much higher altitude than the C-47, they said. It was estimated "somewhere around 50,000 or 60,000 feet."

Captain Cocker also saw the object. He got up from his seat and looked at it from the plane's astrodome.

"I saw something I never saw before," he said.

"It was perfectly round. But I don't know what it was. In a way it looked like a star without any

twinkle, although it appeared a perfectly clear silver color."

Captain Cocker reported that he watched the object about five minutes.

Hovered Near Balloon

"It appeared to hover next to the balloon for a while, and then it separated. As it did, the thing accelerated in speed. Just before it disappeared I saw three brilliant flashes, like photo flashes, then it was gone."

An airman and a civilian also were in the plane and saw the object, it was reported.

Wright Field officials said they had no official comment to make. The flyers, however, reported their observations to field authorities.

Dayton Daily News
15 Feb 51

A. E. Officers Report Seeing Flying Saucer

Two Wright-Patterson Air Force base officers Wednesday reported they recently "saw a strange object" in the sky over Alamogordo, N. M.

Capt. J. E. Cocker of the All-Weather Flying division and Capt. E. W. Spradley of the Aerial Photographic laboratory said they spotted the object while tracking a large weather balloon.

The balloon was similar to the type used in "Project Skyhook," which the Navy disclosed this week.

Capt. Spradley described the experience:

"We were following the balloon when I noticed a strange object in the sky. It was flat and looked like a dime. It was a milky color. It wasn't doing anything, just hovering near the balloon in January."

Capt. Cocker said: "I saw something I never saw before. It was perfectly round. But I don't know what it was. In a way it looked like a star without any twinkle, although it appeared a perfectly clear silver color."

The flyers estimated the object and balloon were "somewhere around 50,000 or 60,000 feet."

"It appeared to hover next to the balloon and then it separated," Capt. Cocker said. "Just before it disappeared, I saw three brilliant flashes, like photo flashes."

Air Materiel Command officials said Thursday they had received no official reports from the two officers and "do not take it too seriously."

"As in most such cases, the observers were too far away to identify what they saw. How much can the average man see at a distance of more than 10 miles" a spokesman said.

16 Feb 51

An Air Force Project named Gopher operating out of Wright-Patterson AFB (approx 3 weeks ago) released a 40 foot plastic balloon for the General Mills Company in the vic of Las Cruces New Mexico. This balloon was intended to ascend to a height of between 10 and 15 miles and stay aloft for a period of several hours. Balloon was accompanied by two pilots operating from Wright Patterson AFB and apparently are the two pilots who have been quoted as stating in Associated Press Release from Dayton, Ohio as having observed an unidentified object in the general area of Las Cruces-Holloman AFB New Mexico area. Info above obtained from Project Off, Holloman AFB and it is rptd that a third individual accompanied the two pilots and that individual will be interviewed for such info as he may have relative to unidentified object.

Further info will be forthcoming when avail.

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FROM: COMALSEAFRON

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269

ACTION TO: CG AAC

INFO TO: CINCAL
USARAL

DTG: JAN 51

Possible origin of flares your 271937Z unkn. There
are no surface vessels known to be in Norton Sound at present.
Aircraft from this Comd have not been in that area recently.

CMIN: 269

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757-4707-D

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PRIORITY

FROM: CG 5001ST COMP WG UNCLASSIFIED 290
ACTION TO: CG AAC
DTG: 12 JAN 51

LEWOP3-0673C, attn Dir of Intel.
Refurmsg AA01D 0540, info as desired fols:
Observations were made by 5 people, 1 white and 4 natives between hrs of 1700 AST on dates as fols.
[redacted], Missionary Swedish Covenant Church approx 1740, 23 Jan. [redacted] (natives), 26 Jan between hrs 1700 and 1800. Jack [redacted] (native), 22 Jan and 25 Jan between 1700 and 1800. [redacted] (native), 24 Jan between 1700 and 1800. All confirmed flare was 15 to 20 miles SSW approx 230 degrees from Unalakleet just above horizon. Orange in color and would disappear after 10 minutes duration and would not re-appear. Intel estimate: 2 OSI agents this hqs made interrogation of above individuals. It is the opinion of both agents that info not too reliable. Mr. Hamilton of Alaskan Native Service instigated wire and rounded up individuals concerned yet, had at no time made any observations. CAA pers could not confirm having seen any such flares. Mr. [redacted] had more personal problems (political) to discuss with some government agency, no concern to military, which was his main concern in this incident. Agents flew 30 miles SSW of Unalakleet, sighted nothing unusual. People queried were asked to rpt reoccurrence of sightings to this hqs.

CMIN: 290

22 Jan
23 Jan
24 Jan
25 Jan

Unalakleet

UNCLASSIFIED 15-22-51

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23-26 Jan

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PRIORITY

A 865

FROM: CG AAC
ACTION TO: COMALSFAPRON KODIAK
INFO TO: CINCAL
USARAL
DTG: Jan 51

AAO1D 0541 fol unclassified report dispatched from
Marks AFB 270737Z. Ired Katchatag National Guard at Unalakleet
reports 3 people observed large flare on open water 230 degrees
magnetic from Unalakleet. Flare also observed 2 days previously.
This HQ attempting to obtain further details. Rec any info
available concerning possible origin of flares.

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DQD DIR 5200.10

A 865

7 Jan 51
Unalakleet
Flare
230°

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7-3712-34