

13 UFOS SELECTED FROM 198 U.S. CASES: July 15 – Aug. 14

185 reports were judged to be identifiable or inappropriate. Refer to the "Profile" feature for monthly evaluations.

U.S. SIGHTINGS

HOW WE LEARN OF UFO'S: UFO reports are from news departments, civilian organizations and individuals all over the world, but most of our reports stem from the Center for UFO Studies' UFO Central Hotline. This is a 24-hour, toll-free telephone service for the exclusive use of law enforcement agencies, FAA agencies, planetaria and other formal channels. This gives us the chance to follow up *all* cases rapidly for first-hand information with unlimited long-distance capability. Other advantages include screening of the hoaxers. Indeed, police who patrol when others are asleep are encouraged to fill this void.

HOW WE DEFINE UFO'S: Any anomalous aerial phenomena whose appearance and/or behavior can't be ascribed to conventional objects and effects—not only by the original witnesses, but also by analysts who possess technical qualifications the original observer may lack.

NL—Nocturnal Light: distant anomalous lights seen in the night sky

DD—Daylight Discs: distant disc-like objects seen during the day

RV—Radar/Visual: UFOs seen by radar and vision simultaneously

CE I—Close Encounter of the First Kind: UFOs seen within 500 feet

CE II—Close Encounter of the Second Kind: CE I's that leave behind physical traces

CE III—Close Encounter of the Third Kind: CE I with humanoid occupants seen

HOW WE NUMBER CASES: All UFO sightings will receive a three element number which will serve as a case "name". The first numbers refer to the volume and issue number of the edition that contains the case, and the last number refers to the order it arrived (example: 1-1-7, the seventh case of the first issue).

1 — UFO of High Merit

First, a comprehensive study of the UFO's reported characteristics, then the technical judgment necessary to satisfy our UFO definition.

HEAVILY-WITNESSED RADAR—VISUAL CASE NEAR KANSAS CITY

CASE #3-9-163

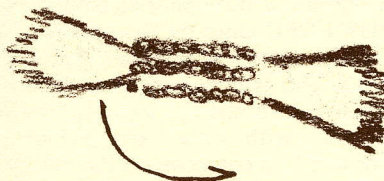
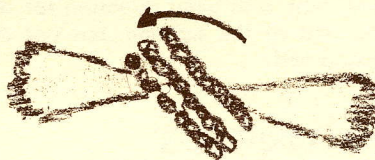
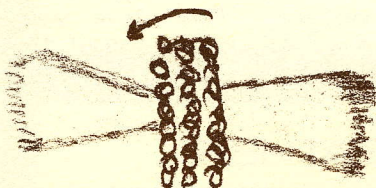
This UFO is certainly an unusual, dynamic one, putting on a show over Belton, MO that could be seen in three neighboring suburbs south of Kansas City, with dozens of witnesses reporting it independently to law enforcement agencies and the local Air Force base (who were *also* watching it). Thus, it is distinguished as the IUR case with the greatest number of witnesses. It also appears to have been seen briefly on radar. If this event was based on a hoax, it would be unprecedentedly elaborate.

ENVIRONMENT

DATE: Tuesday, August 8, 1978.
STARTING TIME: 9:40 PM
PLACE: Belton, Missouri, east of Richard Gebaur Air Force Base, a largely residential area in a suburban city about 15 miles south of downtown Kansas City.

APPEARANCE

Most of the witnesses indicated that they saw a large red light dropping "flares". One individual, Mr. Joseph Staudinger, Jr., was fortunate enough to have been directly underneath the UFO and provided the sketches seen above. Note that the rows of red lights were rotating like a turntable, while the white strobe lights beaming in



Witness sketch of UFO

front of and behind the object remained fixed in the direction of travel. When overhead, Staudinger saw the object as large-looking as a full moon ($\frac{1}{2}$ -degree of arc); coupled with the elevation (estimated from triangulation) of 2800

feet, this provides a *rough* overall size of 25 feet. Binoculars at the Air Force base revealed a faint white blinking light unseen by the tower witnesses with the naked eye accompanying the red lights.

MOTION

Two particularly articulate reports enable us at this stage to triangulate the location and height of the object throughout its trajectory. One viewpoint comes from Sgt. Gary Havens at the Air Force base air tower; the other is provided by Mr. Joseph Staudinger, also formerly in the Air Force, who saw the UFO fly directly over his house on Park Drive (a north-south street) and parallel to the street. His house is two miles SE of the tower at the base. Key points of discussion are numbered below on the map and discussed (all times are approximate, based on interpolations between known endpoints):

1) 9:40 PM: Staudinger, his wife, his 14-year old son and his neighbors (who notified the Air Force base) watched the object come from the south over the tree line.

2) 9:42 PM: UFO passed virtually overhead on Park Drive. This is the point where the tower at Richard Gebaur first took note of it, about 15 to 20° up. This triangulates to a height of about 2800 feet. No noise was

heard.

3) 9:47 PM: The object stopped here, according to both witnesses. For the Air Force base witnesses, it was now due east about 15° up. For the Park Drive witnesses, it was due north, about 15 degrees up. This works out to 2000 feet, adopting the elevation angles literally. The UFO flew at roughly a level altitude, then, taking about five minutes to travel from the Staudinger house to a position 1.4 miles north of it. This works out to a speed of 17 m.p.h. -- more like a balloon than a plane, or possibly a helicopter. Sgt. Havens estimated the distance now to be 3/4 to 1½ miles away...an excellent guess, since the UFO works out to a distance of 1.4 miles from the tower. Another individual, on the base, standing about two blocks due east of the tower, also confirmed the "due east" position for the UFO once it had stopped. Since the base has no radar of its own, Havens called Kansas City International Airport, over 30 miles north of the action, to see if they could track "anything east of the base". Controller Hal Roberts confirmed that they could, but that it was intermittent, appearing as a non-transponding target only 7 or 8 sweeps out of 30. Interestingly, Havens did not clue Roberts at KCI how far he should look; yet when Allan Hendry called Roberts directly and asked how far the target was from the small painted line indicating the runway at Richard Gebaur, he told us "one and one-half miles", which corresponds perfectly to the now-triangulated position.

It was here in the ten-minute hovering position that the UFO performed its spookiest stunt, seen by virtually everyone with whom we spoke: it dropped a red/orange flare down toward the ground. Everyone agreed, however, that the flare could be seen fizzling out before it hit the ground. Prior to this, a white flash of light was seen by both Havens and Staudinger. It looked like it had occurred beneath the red lights through binoculars (as seen from the tower). The Park Drive witnesses actually heard a loud "pop" or "crack" sound accompanying the flash. The tower witnesses didn't hear the noise, but an airman named Lucas near the main gate of the base did; in fact, he reported several such "explosions".

4) 10:00 PM: Now the object rose straight up, as seen from both vantage points. This was a slow process, taking 15 to 20 minutes. From the tower, the red lights were seen to disappear suddenly at what was guessed to be an increase in altitude of 4000 feet. Another good guess, according to the triangulations: using their elevation

angle of 45° as a more accurate gauge of height, the height of the object was equal to the original distance: about 1.4 miles. Although the red lights could no longer be seen with the naked eye, the use of binoculars continued to reveal the dim flashing white light. Havens watched it move southbound now for "about a quarter mile". It then turned abruptly northbound again still at a slow speed. Then it drifted ESE, climbing to a higher altitude at an estimated speed greater than 200 knots, at position (5) at 10:23 PM.

Meanwhile, back at Park Drive, the rising, levelling off, north-south "glitch" and ESE departure were all seen as a straight trajectory that extended up to 15° east of their zenith (overhead). This is much further along its trajectory for the red lights to disappear than was seen from the side view of the Air Force tower, but then the Park Drive witnesses were underneath it (at position (6)).

Incidentally, once the UFO started rising up, Havens called Roberts at the Kansas City airport again, but that controller saw nothing on his radar screen now -- a disappointment.

All of the above figures are subject to error, of course, as they are based on the elevation angle estimates. That the UFO's flight path was aligned with the north-south Park Drive was fortunate. Total Duration: about 45 minutes.

WEATHER

The tower witnesses at Richard Gebaur noted the sky to be clear, with winds from the SSE (170°) at 3 to 6 knots. These wind conditions were not variable during the event. Note that the motion of the object is, thus, fairly consistent with wind direction for the first half of the sighting, but not the second half.

WITNESS REACTION

The sighting is distinguished among all of IUR's UFO cases by the number of individual witnesses involved. Richard Gebaur AFB had numerous witnesses on their own property; they also were "flooded" with calls from civilians. According to a detective on the Belton police force, their agency received 20 calls. Reportedly, neighboring Grandview and Kansas City police departments also received calls. There's no question that *something* was in the sky over Belton that night. Nor can it be claimed that press attention generated a lot of false sightings, since the case miraculously escaped the

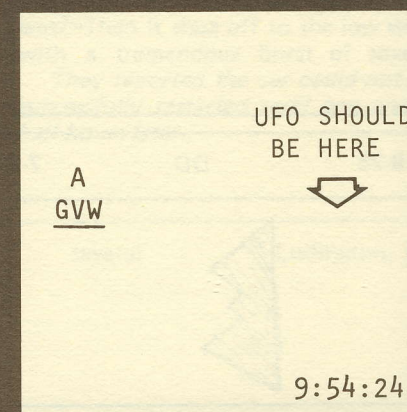
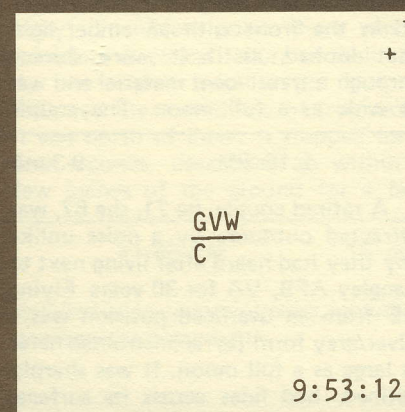
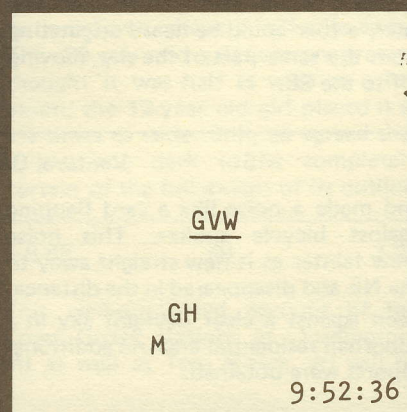
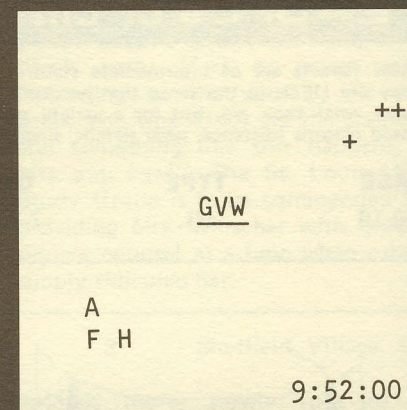
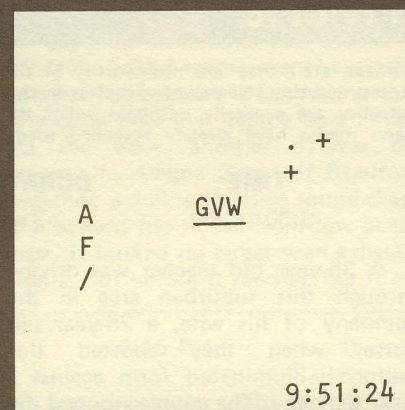
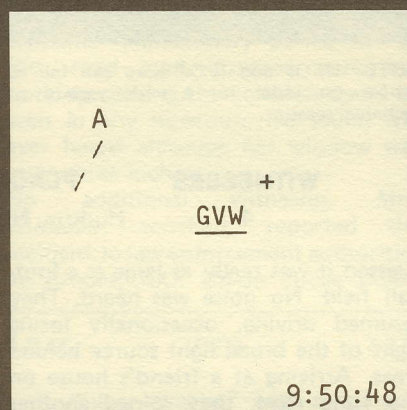
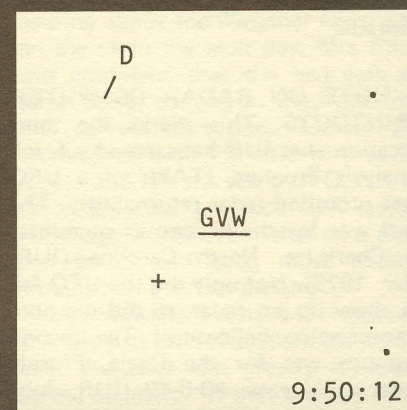
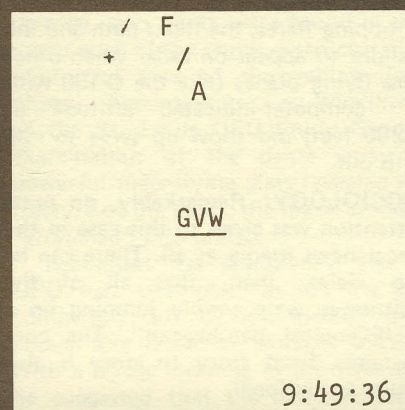
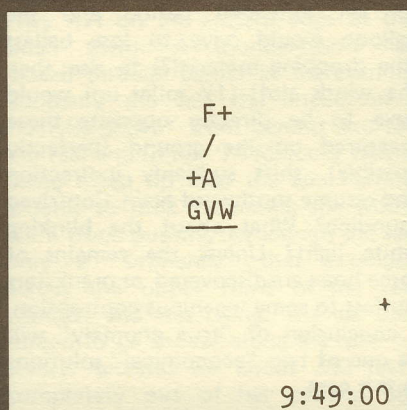
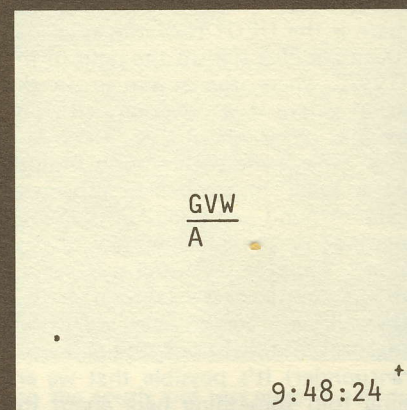
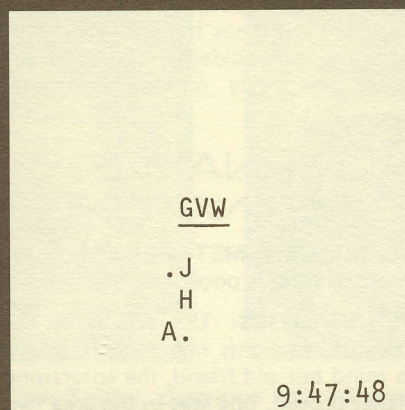
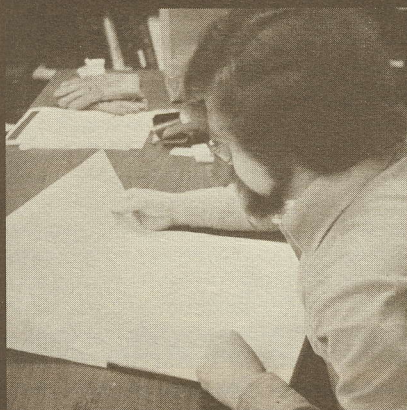
attention of the local news media (who normally watch police blotters like a hawk). In IUR's experience, a huge turnout of independent witnesses for a sighting usually foretells a ready commonplace explanation (e.g., meteors, ad planes and other conspicuous IFOs), but what could this one be? Sgt. Gary Havens, an air traffic controller with nine years of experience said it was "something like I've never seen before." IUR is still in the process of coordinating the many witnesses to the event; any new information will appear in a future issue. Obviously, in a case like this, the routine "suspicions" normally applied to reporting witnesses can be relaxed considerably.

ON THE CASE

Original source: direct call from Richard Gebaur Air Force Base security police to the Center for UFO Studies' Hotline. Comprehensive interviews were conducted with the principal witnesses discussed here within 24 hours of the event by Allan Hendry. More witnesses are still being contacted, but so far, most of them have not watched the object as completely or carefully as the witnesses mentioned. They do all note a large red light "making explosions" or dropping "red lights".

The large number of independent witnesses precluded the need to conduct routine searches for more; there is no question in this particular case that *something* was there. In an effort to probe the nature of the target a little further, IUR obtained the cooperation of the FAA's Air Route Traffic Control Center in Olathe, KS in securing a computer printout of all of the radar targets in that vicinity, both "raw" and transponder-equipped, for the duration of the event. Several time frames are shown here, restricted in area to the vicinity of Richard Gebaur Air Force Base. Targets that have been assigned letter codes are aircraft with transponders; a separate chart shows their transponder frequencies and altitudes. The Air Force Base is coded as "GVW". Targets without transponders (including light aircraft, "false" targets and - presumably - UFOs) are depicted as periods (.) and plus signs (+). Plus signs are more solid targets. Now halfway through the event, a C-130 made an approach to the base from 10 miles to the south. When the pilot approached to within 3 miles, he was asked if he could see the UFO visually. He could, but he was reluctant to get anywhere near "the explosions". Havens recalled that he cut due west of the base one mile, cut to the south for three miles and turned northbound again to land

provided by the FAA. Small 2½ - mile sections of the area in question are reproduced below. The letters GVW indicate the position of the Gebaur Air Force Base. The cluster of letters (primarily "A") surround the counter-clockwise flight of the C-130 landing at the Air Force base. A non-transponding target(s) is seen moving NNE, too, but the UFO, which should appear in the position shown by arrow in the last frame, fails to appear in any of the frames we examined.



at the base. These maneuvers show up clearly on the printout. Another non-transponding target can also be seen flying NNE through the area, but where is the UFO? It should appear as a dot or a plus sign to the right of the "GVW" where the tower is; in the period where it is hovering and rising straight up, it should be about 1½" away. One frame with a good fit doth not a radar match make, especially when ground clutter "dots" keep popping up sporadically. Not that it *should* appear constantly, since ARTCC controllers claim at best a 50% success rate in receiving "raw" radar returns (without the aid of a transponder). It's possible that we are being told something here about the nature of the object's tenuousness when the radar returns from it are so sporadic.

A NOTE ON RADAR COMPUTER PRINTOUTS: This marks the third occasion that IUR has secured a Track Analysis Program (TAP) on a UFO that promised radar returnability. The first was for the helicopter encounter in Charlotte, North Carolina (IUR, Mar. 1978). Not only did the UFO fail to show up on radar, so did the non-transponding helicopter! The second instance was for the Ocala, Florida radar-visual case #3-6-40 (IUR, June

1978); this one is still being examined. While there is a possible target executing a hairpin reversal of motion, we still need better time estimates from the witnesses to establish that it isn't just a coincidental "false" target (there are many on this printout).

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

ASTRONOMY, METEOROLOGY: No interpretation is possible.

AERONAUTICS: The sketch of the rows of red lights immediately brings to mind our old friend, the advertising plane. Indeed, one was in the area two hours previous to the sightings. The kind of rotation, the flashes, pops, and dropping flares, the flight path and the failure to appear on radar when other low-flying planes (like the C-130 with a computer-indicated altitude of 1200 feet) *did* show up serve to rule this out.

SOCIOLOGY: Remarkably, no press attention was given to this case in the local news media at all. There can be no claim, then, that all of the witnesses were simply jumping on a "UFOlogical bandwagon". The consistency from story to story is also quite exceptional.

CONCLUSIONS

That an undeniably mysterious object was seen over the skies of Belton, Missouri appears to be undeniable. A truly anomalous UFO? For once, there seems to be only one other credible alternative: a truly bizarre prank balloon, constructed in a way that would suggest a slowly-rotating rectangular array of red lights! This would account for the slow speed, the initial conformance to wind direction, the characteristic "dropping burning material", and the tenuous radar returns. For this to work out, though, the windborne propulsion of the balloon would have to stop abruptly for an extended period and the balloon would have to lose ballast (the dropping material?) to rise; then the winds aloft (1½ miles up) would have to be directly opposite those measured on the ground (perfectly possible), shift suddenly indirection and resume southward again. Contrived sounding? What about the blinking white light? Unless the remains of some hoax are discovered, or pranksters confess to some ingenious contraption, a conclusion of "true anomaly" will be one of two "economical" solutions in this case.

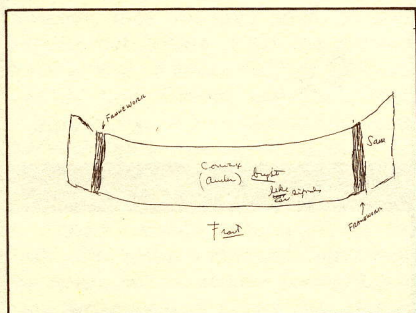
2—UFOs of Limited Merit

These reports are of intermediate stature. They are UFOs in the sense that we don't know what they are, but for a variety of stated reasons (distance, poor details, single

witness, etc.) they are not worthy of the closest scrutiny. Names of witnesses in this category are generally withheld unless the news media have already revealed them.

NOTE: UFOs and IFOs alike can fail to appear on radar for a wide variety of technical reasons.

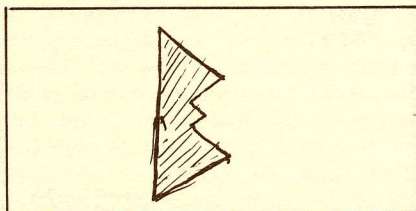
CASE	TYPE	DATE	TIME	DURATION	WITNESSES	PLACE
3-9-19	NL	7-19-78	9:30-10 PM	2-3 min.	4	Hudson, NY



A 35-year old teacher was driving through this suburban area in the company of his wife, a 28-year old nurse, when they spotted this uniformly-illuminated form against a clear dark sky. The couple stopped the car to confirm that it really was motionless in the sky. It looked rounded in the front with an amber light that looked as if it were shining through a translucent material and was as wide as a full moon. The couple

guessed it was really as large as a football field. No noise was heard. They resumed driving, occasionally losing sight of the broad light source behind trees. Arriving at a friend's house on the same road, they joined another couple to watch it but the lights suddenly went out. Thirty seconds later, a roar could be heard originating from the same part of the sky, moving off to the SE.

3-9-28	DD	7-22-78	1:15 PM	2-3 min.	6	Ventura, CA
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A retired couple, he 71, she 67, was attracted outdoors by a noise unlike any they had heard after living next to Langley AFB, VA for 30 years. Flying NE from an overhead position was a silver/grey form (as reconstructed here) as large as a full moon. It was sharply defined, had lines across its surface,

and made a noise like a card flapping against bicycle spokes. This noise grew fainter as it flew straight away to the NE and disappeared in the distance. Seen against a clear daylight sky in a suburban residential area; no additional reports were obtained.