

PROTECTED [REDACTED] UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #118

ATIC NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
AP NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
REPORT NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF REPORT \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME OF SIGHTING 1630  
SHAPE N/s  
SIZE white point  
COURSE south to north  
NO. IN GROUP 1  
SOUND \_\_\_\_\_  
PHOTOS \_\_\_\_\_ SKETCHES \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF INFO 28 28 May 48  
LOCATION Berlin, Germany  
SOURCE Former German guided missile expert  
DATE IN TO ATIC \_\_\_\_\_  
COLOR white Estimated  
SPEED rather fast Measured  
ALTITUDE 14 kilometers Estimated  
LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED \_\_\_\_\_  
TYPE OF OBSERVATION ground  
MANEUVERS \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary ATIC Form 329  
(2 Jan 52)

UNCLASSIFIED





# UFO form continued

20. Do you think you can estimate the speed of the object?

(Circle One) Yes  No

IF you answered YES, then what speed would you estimate? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you think you can estimate how far away from you the object was?

(Circle One) Yes  No

IF you answered YES, then how far away would you say it was? very far

22. Where were you located when you saw the object?

(Circle One):

- a. Inside a building
- b. In a car
- c. Outdoors
- d. In an airplane (type)
- e. At sea

f. Other resting on my back

23. Were you (Circle One)

- a. In the business section of a city?
- b. In the residential section of a city?
- c. In open countryside?
- d. Near an airfield?
- e. Flying over a city?
- f. Flying over open country?

g. Other \_\_\_\_\_

24. IF you were MOVING IN AN AUTOMOBILE or other vehicle at the time, then complete the following questions:

24.1 What direction were you moving? (Circle One)

- |              |              |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| a. North     | c. East      | e. South     | g. West      |
| b. Northeast | d. Southeast | f. Southwest | h. Northwest |

24.2 How fast were you moving? \_\_\_\_\_ miles per hour.

24.3 Did you stop at any time while you were looking at the object?

(Circle One) Yes  No

25. Did you observe the object through any of the following?

- |                 |                                      |    |                |                                      |    |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|----|----------------|--------------------------------------|----|
| a. Eyeglasses   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | No | e. Binoculars  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | No |
| b. Sun glasses  | Yes                                  | No | f. Telescope   | Yes                                  | No |
| c. Windshield   | Yes                                  | No | g. Theodolite  | Yes                                  | No |
| d. Window glass | Yes                                  | No | h. Other _____ |                                      |    |

26. In order that you can give as clear a picture as possible of what you saw, describe in your own words a common object or objects which, when placed up in the sky, would give the same appearance as the object which you saw.

a modern plane without wings + propeller,  
or as a fat cigar. Or as a star,  
but squeezed flat, without sparkles,  
and got blue light

# Official U.S. Air Force

14. Did the object disappear while you were watching it? If so, how?

*I only looked at the stars, and saw different shaped ones, brighter + very slow moving at a very far distance.*

15. Did the object move behind something at any time, particularly a cloud?

(Circle One): Yes  No  Don't know. IF you answered YES, then tell what

it moved behind: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Did the object move in front of something at any time, particularly a cloud?

(Circle One): Yes  No  Don't know. IF you answered YES, then tell what

in front of: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Tell in a few words the following things about the object:

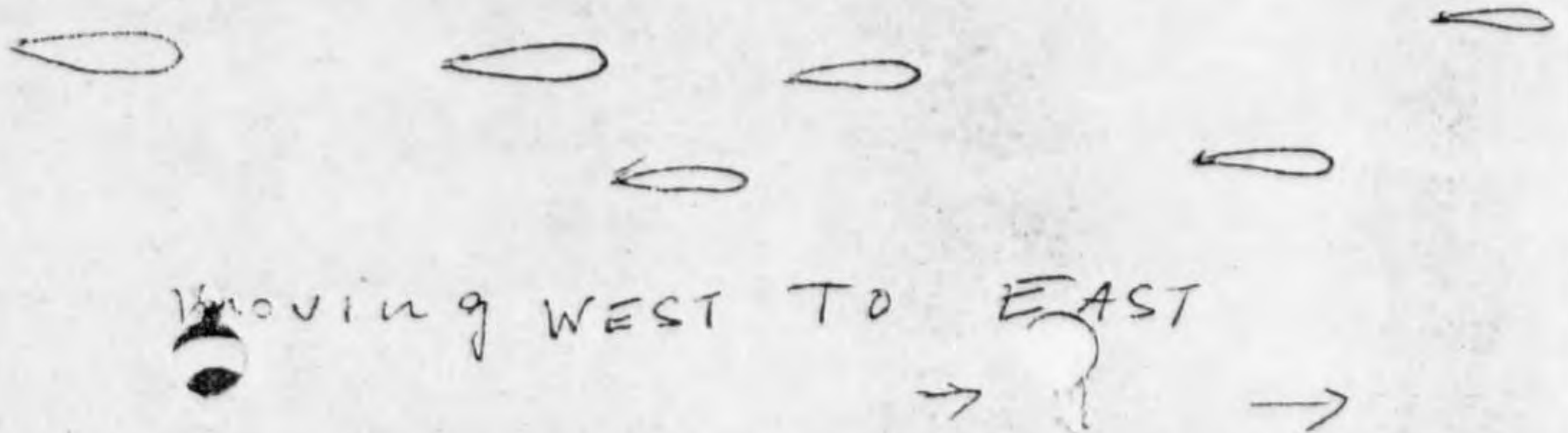
a. Sound *none too far away*

b. Color *blue, a little darker than neon lights.*

18. We wish to know the angular size. Hold a match stick at arm's length in line with a known object and note how much of the object is covered by the head of the match. If you had performed this experiment at the time of the sighting, how much of the object would have been covered by the match head?

*1/2 or 1/4 would have been covered.*

19. Draw a picture that will show the shape of the object or objects. Label and include in your sketch any details of the object that you saw such as wings, protrusions, etc., and especially exhaust trails or vapor trails. Place an arrow beside the drawing to show the direction the object was moving.



# FORCE UFO FORM

8. IF you saw the object at NIGHT, what did you notice concerning the STARS and MOON?

8.1 STARS (Circle One):

- a. None
- b. A few
- c. Many
- d. Don't remember

8.2 MOON (Circle One):

- a. Bright moonlight
- b. Dull moonlight
- c. No moonlight—pitch dark
- d. Don't remember

*The moon was not to see at my position.*

9. What were the weather conditions at the time you saw the object?

CLOUDS (Circle One):

- a. Clear sky
- b. Hazy
- c. Scattered clouds
- d. Thick or heavy clouds

WEATHER (Circle One):

- a. Dry + hot
- b. Fog, mist, or light rain
- c. Moderate or heavy rain
- d. Snow
- e. Don't remember

10. The object appeared: (Circle One):

- a. Solid
- b. Transparent
- c. Vapor
- d. As a light
- e. Don't remember

11. If it appeared as a light, was it brighter than the brightest stars? (Circle One):

- a. Brighter
- b. Dimmer
- OR
- c. About the same
- d. Don't know

11.1 Compare brightness to some common object:

*blue light not larger than stars, but cigar shaped*

12. The edges of the object were:

- (Circle One):
- a. Fuzzy or blurred
  - b. Like a bright star
  - c. Sharply outlined
  - d. Don't remember

e. Other cigar shape

13. Did the object:

(Circle One for each question)

- a. Appear to stand still at any time?
- b. Suddenly speed up and rush away at any time?
- c. Break up into parts or explode?
- d. Give off smoke?
- e. Change brightness?
- f. Change shape?
- g. Flash or flicker?
- h. Disappear and reappear?

- |                                      |                                     |   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Don't know |
| Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | Don't know                                  |
| Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | Don't know                                  |
| Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | Don't know                                  |
| Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | Don't know                                  |
| Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | Don't know                                  |
| Yes                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No | Don't know                                  |

7-3712-5

# OFFICIAL U.S. AIR

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## U.S. AIR FORCE TECHNICAL INFORMATION

This questionnaire has been prepared so that you can give the U.S. Air Force as much information as possible concerning the unidentified aerial phenomenon that you have observed. Please try to answer as many questions as you possibly can. The information that you give will be used for research purposes. Your name will not be used in connection with any statements, conclusions, or publications without your permission. We request this personal information so that if it is deemed necessary, we may contact you for further details.

1. When did you see the object?

\_\_\_\_ Day      \_\_\_\_ Month      1948<sup>?</sup> Year

2. Time of day: 11-12  
Hours                      Minutes

(Circle One):      A.M.      or       P.M.

*then I went to bed*

3. Time Zone:

(Circle One): a. Eastern  
b. Central  
c. Mountain  
d. Pacific  
 e. Other Middle East

(Circle One): a. Daylight Saving  
b. Standard

4. Where were you when you saw the object?

KEFAR ATA

Nearest Postal Address

near HAI FA

City or Town

ISRAEL

State or County

5. How long was object in sight? (Total Duration)

\_\_\_\_ Hours      \_\_\_\_ Minutes      \_\_\_\_ Seconds

a. Certain  
b. Fairly certain

c. Not very sure  
d. Just a guess

5.1 How was time in sight determined? \_\_\_\_\_

5.2 Was object in sight continuously?      Yes       No \_\_\_\_\_

6. What was the condition of the sky?

DAY  
a. Bright  
b. Cloudy

NIGHT  
 a. Bright  
b. Cloudy

7. IF you saw the object during DAYLIGHT, where was the SUN located as you looked at the object?

(Circle One): a. In front of you  
b. In back of you  
c. To your right

d. To your left  
e. Overhead  
f. Don't remember

Wright Flight Service Center  
Wright Field  
Dayton, Ohio

Date 9 January 1948

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident

TO: Commanding Officer, Flying Safety Division, Field Office of the  
Air Inspector, HQ AF, Langley Field, Virginia  
Commanding Officer, Flight Service, Washington 25, D.C.  
Commanding Officer, 74th AF BU, 102nd Weather Group, Mitchel Field  
Hempstead, New York

1. Flight Plan: 7 Jan 1947 NG3869 4-P51 Mantell Marietta Ga, VFR

Standiford Field, Louisville Ky 30 D1342C 110/300/32

2. Date, time and scene of accident: 7 Jan 1948 Approximately 1645C

2 miles SW Franklin Ky 36°-42'N 86°-35'W

3. Flight Service Clearance: (Yes) (No) (Not Necessary) (If "Yes" attach Copy

If "No" explain why) Flight was cleared by an established base operations office

4. ATIS Clearance: (Yes) (No)

5. Flight advisory issued: (Yes) (No) (If "Yes" attach Copy - If "No"

explain why) No. No hazardous conditions were foreseen to exist for this

flight.

6. Position reports: None

7. Pertinent weather: (See Inclosure # 1)

8. Narrative Summary of additional information: NG3869 was contacted by Godman tower as his flight of 4 P51 passed over Godman Field enroute from Marietta Ga. to Standiford Fld, Louisville Ky and requested him to investigate unidentified balloon-like object hovering in the sky in the vicinity of Godman Field. Three of the snips started to climb toward the object. Pilot Hendricks in H.G. 33C continued on and landed 1501C at Standiford Field Louisville Ky. Pilots Harcourt, NG757 & Clements NG800, climbed to 23,000 feet with Mantell in NG3869 then continued on to their original destination because of lack of oxygen arriving there at 1540C. Mantell continued climbing toward object. Standiford operations advised Wright Flight Service Center at 1750C that NG3869 pilot Mantell, crashed 2 miles southwest of Franklin Kentucky at approximately 1645C. Accident fatal to pilot, major damage to aircraft.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

1. Incl. 10/1

DE ARMOND E. LATTRETS  
Major, USAF  
Deputy Commander

ROBERTSON FIELD  
MARIETTA, OHIO

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 12/22/00 BY 60322 UCBAW/STP/STP

1225-00

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# Description of Object - Godman Observers

H. Ed. Garrison - circular, resembled full moon

P. J. ~~Blinn~~ } Cone shaped  
 Sgt Blackwell }

few  
 about  
 in  
 minutes  
 back

Lt. Orner - Round and white

Lt. Col. Wood - hanging in the sky

Col. Hix -  $\frac{1}{4}$  size of full moon, stationary,  
 white

## Description of object seen at Clinton FEB.

A. 6 observers at Wilmington, site of

Clinton ~~400~~ stated that a cone shaped  
<sup>gummy and lumpy object</sup>  
 object, which is what an partially  
 inflated sky look balloon would  
 look like. It was in sight for approx 30.  
 sec stated it disappeared in general  
 SW direction.

B. 1 observer described it as an inverted  
 triangle or a cone - of cloud and  
 descended. It moved to the SW - where  
 it disappeared. Wind was from NE to  
 SW. which is in the exact

Direction of GODMAN.



partially inflated  
 balloon

Detailed description of object

Note: Ray not dated - 1. 10. 16 (p. 59). Date of report and rec'd date for

See  
Page 59-60 of  
Rupperts book, re  
his comments on  
Mantell case

Right. but where is the US  
and they book plot?

These are the statements of  
witnesses to the Mantell  
incident, as result of  
interviews to obtain factual  
data.

RESTRICTED

11. RESULTS TO CREW: Thomas F. Mantell, Jr., Captain - fatal

12. NARRATION OF EVENTS: On the 9th of January, a flight of four P-51's departed Marietta Air Base, Marietta, Georgia, enroute to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Captain Mantell was the acting Flight Commander and filed the Form 23 at Marietta for all four aircraft. The flight proceeded according to plan without incident to the vicinity of Godman Field, Kentucky. Captain Mantell was asked by Godman Tower to investigate an unidentified object in the sky to the southwest. Captain Mantell led the flight in that direction and started climbing at full power. At this time the one wingman, Lt. Hammond, broke formation and proceeded to Standiford and landed. At approximately 22,500 feet, the other aircraft turned back due to lack of oxygen. A short while later an observer on the ground noticed an aircraft circling at a high altitude then came diving down, slowly spiralling and evidently under full power. At approximately half way from the originally observed altitude and the ground, the plane was seen to disintegrate and subsequently crash on a farm near Franklin, Kentucky. This aircraft was identified as the one piloted by Captain Mantell who was found in the wreckage.

13. INVESTIGATION DISCLOSED:

- a. The purpose of the flight to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky, was to return the four P-51's to the Air National Guard that were grounded at Marietta for weather a week previous.
- b. Form 23 was completed by Captain Mantell and weather was above defined VFR minimums. (Exhibit 1)
- c. In the vicinity of Godman Field, Kentucky, the flight leader was contacted by the tower operator who requested that he investigate an unidentified object if he had enough fuel. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- d. Captain Mantell advised Godman tower that he had sufficient fuel remaining and that he would investigate the object as requested. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- e. Captain Mantell did not advise the other aircraft in his flight of his intention. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- f. The number 2 man in the flight broke away at this point and returned to Standiford. (Exhibit 3)
- g. Captain Mantell started a sharp spiraling climb to the right which necessitated power settings of 47" M.P. and 2700 RPM for the wingman to stay in position. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- h. At 14,000 feet, Captain Mantell broke off the spiral and started a straight climb on a heading of approximately 220° at the maximum rate of climb. (Exhibits 4 and 5)

RESTRICTED

123500

## CHECK-LIST - UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Incident #118

1. Date **28 Mar 48**
2. Time **1630 hours**
3. Location **Berlin Lichtenrade, Kirchbachstrasse 2**
4. Name of observer **[REDACTED]**
5. Occupation of observer **Former guided missile expert at Eximmetall Bernig**
6. Address of observer **Berlin Lichtenrade, Kirchbachstrasse 2**
7. Place of observation **As above**
8. Number of objects **1**
9. Distance of object from observer **N/S**
10. Time in sight **N/S**
11. Altitude **14 kilometers**
12. Speed **rather fast**
13. Direction of flight **South to North**
14. Tactics **N/S**
15. Sound **No sound reported**
16. Size **"white point"**
17. Color **White**
18. Shape **N/S**
19. Odor detected **N/S**
20. Apparent construction **N/S**
21. Exhaust trails **No exhaust trail reported**
22. Weather conditions **clear**
23. Effect on clouds **N/S**
24. Sketches or photographs **None**
25. Manner of disappearance **N/S**
26. Remarks: **(over)**

- i. At 16,000 feet, Lt. Clements, the right wingman, put on his oxygen mask and began breathing oxygen. (Exhibit 4)
- j. Captain Mantell, the flight leader and Lt. Hammond, the left wingman, did not have oxygen or oxygen masks. (Exhibits 4 and 5)
- k. At 18,000 feet, Lt. Clements attempted to pull up close to the flight leader and signal him with hand signals to listen out on Channel B. (Exhibit 4)
- l. Captain Mantell had at no time signalled for a change over to "B" Baker Channel which is customary procedure for the flight leader. (Exhibit 4)
- m. At 20,000 feet, Lt. Clements advised Captain Mantell that their ETA for Standiford had elapsed and suggested that he notify Collins tower to relay their position to Flight Service to which Captain Mantell replied "Roger." (Exhibit 4)
- n. A few minutes later, Captain Mantell called the flight's attention to a city with an airport beside it, which was identified by Lt. Clements as Bowling Green. (Exhibit 4)
- o. At approximately 20,000 feet, Captain Mantell called the flight's attention to an object at 1200 P'clock. (Exhibit 4 and 5)
- p. Captain Mantell's transmission was garbled, but Lt. Clements stated he mentioned something about going to 25,000 feet for 10 minutes. (Exhibit 4)
- q. At 22,500 feet, Lt. Clements advised flight leader that he was breaking off to lead the other wingman back to Standiford Field, however, his transmission was not acknowledged by Captain Mantell. (Exhibit 4)
- r. Through the later stages of this climb, Lt. Hammond was signaling that he was having trouble due to the lack of oxygen and requested descending to a lower altitude. (Exhibit 4)
- s. At the time Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond broke off from the flight, (22,500) Captain Mantell was observed climbing directly into the sun. (Exhibit 4)
- t. From 18,000 feet on, the point at which the high blower engine of Lt. Clements had to use full power to maintain his position in the formation. (Exhibit 4)
- u. The last radio contact with Captain Mantell was at 20,000 feet and from all appearances he seemed to have the aircraft under perfect control. (Exhibit 4)
- v. Captain Mantell's aircraft was next observed by William C. Hayes, a civilian from Franklin, Kentucky, circling and after about three circles started into a power dive slowly rotating. (Exhibits 6 and 7)

- w. The aircraft was making a terrific noise, ever increasing as it descended according to the statement of the two witnesses. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- x. According to the statements of the witnesses, the aircraft exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- y. None of the witnesses observed any fire coming from the aircraft during the descent. (Exhibits 6, 7, 8 and 9)
- z. The aircraft crashed at approximately 1520 GST, southwest of Franklin, Kentucky. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- aa. The aircraft did not explode or burn on impact. (Exhibits 6 and 7)
- bb. Parts of the ailerons fuselage, empennage and glass from the canopy, were scattered over an area of 1/4 of a mile. (Exhibits 10 and 11)
- cc. Captain Mantell, pilot, was found in the cockpit of the aircraft. (Exhibits 10 and 11)
- dd. The force of the crash snapped the pilot's safety belt.
- ee. The aircraft was not serviced with oxygen at Marietta as none was available at that station. (Exhibit 2)
- ff. Standiford Field did not have oxygen available, however, a bill of lading had been received showing that oxygen was being sent to the 165th Fighter Squadron.
- gg. Statements of other pilots in the flight confirm the fact that Captain Mantell did not have an oxygen mask. (Exhibit 4)

#### 14. CONTRIBUTING CAUSE FACTORS:

- a. The poor judgement displayed by Captain Mantell in that he elected to climb to altitude without oxygen equipment.
- b. The effects of anoxia rendering Captain Mantell unconscious causing, loss of control of the aircraft.

#### 15. COMMENTS:

- a. It is the opinion of the undersigned that the effects of anoxia on Captain Mantell was the underlying cause of this accident. While no definite altitude can be given as the exact limit of human tolerance to a lack of oxygen, it is a well known fact that rapid lowering of the oxygen saturation of arterial blood, as occurred in the rapid ascent of Captain Mantell, will produce symptoms of acute anoxia in a very short time. AF publication

1235000

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contend that it is possible to remain conscious for a few minutes at 25,000 feet but collapse occurs very rapidly. It is reasonable to assume that Captain Mantell was not aware of the symptoms of anoxia in that his high altitude flying experience was very limited. Prior to his separation from the service and affiliation with the Air National Guard, Captain Mantell was assigned to Troop Carrier Command and according to fellow officers had no occasion to participate in high altitude flights.

- b. At the time Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond, who incidentally, had been aware of anoxia symptoms for some time, broke away from the lead ship, they estimated that their altitude was 22,500 feet. The range between 15,000 and 20,000 feet is referred to as the disturbance stage and occasionally there are no subjective sensations up to the time of unconsciousness. The critical stage is between 20,000 and 25,000 feet at which altitude consciousness can be lost rapidly, depending on the physical condition of the individual.

It is believed that Captain Mantell was rendered unconscious from anoxia and the uncontrolled aircraft started a slow spiral culminating into a dive which was precipitated by the high power settings and torque. Consequently, the aircraft with its engine producing full power rapidly exceeded its design limitation as was evidenced from the photos, disposition of the wreckage, and later supplemented by civilians statements to the effect that the aircraft disintegrated approximately half way from its initial point of dive to the ground.

- c. Assuming that Captain Mantell was rendered unconscious, it is not likely that he would have had sufficient time to recover and abandon the aircraft before it crashed.
- d. It is the opinion of the undersigned that all fighter aircraft should be serviced with oxygen before each flight and that it be compulsory that the pilot have an oxygen mask in his possession.

The above would preclude the possibility of a pilot taking any unnecessary chances by flying at altitude without the proper oxygen equipment.

#### 16. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. This accident be publicized through the media of Flying Safety publication "Crash and Consequences."

#### 17. STATEMENT OF REBUTTAL:

- a. Inasmuch as the pilot was killed in the accident, it was impossible to obtain a statement of rebuttal regarding pilot error.

23500

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ROBERT J. T. JOHNSON  
Major, USAF

165TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (ANG)  
Standiford Field  
P. O. Box 1167  
Louisville, Kentucky

21 January 1948

SUBJECT: Transmittal of WD AAF Form 14

TO: Headquarters, Army Air Forces, Field Office, The Air Inspector,  
Langley Field, Va.

1. Transmitted herewith in accordance with NGB Air Memorandum 62-4 dated 27 January 1947 is WD AAF Form 14 and allied papers pertaining to aircraft accident 7 January 1948 involving P-51D type aircraft, serial number 44-63869, the P-51D # 44-63869 piloted by Captain Thomas F. Mantell Jr. ASN C-806 873, Pilot.

*Lee J. Menkin*  
LEE J. MENKIN  
Captain RNAC  
Commanding

13 Incls:

1. WD AAF Form 14
2. WD AAF Form 23
3. WD AAF Form 1A
4. WD AAF Form 1
5. List of previous write ups on Form 1A
6. Statement of Investigating Officer
7. Statement of Godman Field Control Tower Operator
8. Lt. Clements Statement
9. Statement of [REDACTED]
10. Statement of Mrs. [REDACTED]
11. Statement of [REDACTED]
12. Statement of [REDACTED]
13. Photographs of accident.

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ARMY AIR FORCES

REPORT OF MAJOR ACCIDENT

Use this form in accordance with AAF Reg. 62-14 and "Aircraft Accident Investigator's Handbook" issued by Office of Flying Safety, Headquarters, AAF.

Fill in all spaces except where otherwise indicated.

If additional space is needed, use additional sheet(s) and identify by proper section letter and subsection number.

FIELD OFFICES—DO NOT USE THIS SPACE	ACTUAL DATE	1-8	FIELD OFFICE USE ONLY
	PRELIMINARY DATE RECEIVED	1-26	
	FORM 14 RECEIVED	2-7	
	EVALUATED BY	[Signature]	
	VERIFIED BY	[Signature]	
	CHECKED BY	[Signature]	
CODED BY	10	2-7	NO AIRCRAFT INVOLVED

Section A—GENERAL INFORMATION

1. PLACE OF ACCIDENT—State, County, Nearest Town, Distance and Direction from same. **Kentucky, Simpson, Franklin, 3.5 miles SW**

Nearest Army Airfield, Distance and Direction from same. **Godman Field, 90 miles SSW**

2. WAS COLLISION WITH OTHER AIRCRAFT?  Yes  No

AF NOS. OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED (File separate Form 14 for each aircraft)

DATE: **7 Jan 48** HOURS AND TIME ZONE: **1518 CST** DAY:  DAY  NIGHT

Section B—AIRCRAFT

1. AIRCRAFT NO. **44-63869**

2. TYPE MODEL SERIES **P 51 D**

3. HOME STATION **Standiford Field, Louisville, Ky.**

4. AIR FORCE OR COMMAND **11th AAF** SUBCOMMAND **526** WING **55th** GROUP NO. AND TYPE **123rd Ftr Gp (NG)** SQUADRON **165th**

5. DATE OF MANUFACTURE **15 Dec 44** TOTAL HOURS **172:30** DATE LAST OVERHAUL **none** OVERHAULING DEPT OR SUB-DEPT **none** HOURS SINCE OVERHAUL **none**

6. Attach detailed statement of tech orders having direct bearing on this accident which have not been complied with. Describe orders and give reasons for noncompliance.

Section C—OPERATOR (Person at controls at time of accident)

1. LAST NAME **WANTELL** FIRST NAME **THOMAS** MIDDLE INITIAL **F.** JR. GRADE **Captain** BRANCH **KYANG** AFN **0-806873** SEX **M** AGE **25**

2. ATTACHED STATION **526** AF OR COMMAND **11th AAF** SUBCOMMAND **526** WING **55th** GROUP NO. AND TYPE **123rd Ftr Gp** SQUADRON **165th**

3. ASSIGNED STATION **526** AF OR COMMAND **11th AAF** SUBCOMMAND **526** WING **55th** GROUP NO. AND TYPE **123rd Ftr Gp** SQUADRON **165th**

4. AERONAUTICAL RATING:  Yes  No PRESENT RATING **Pilot** DATE RECEIVED **8-30-43** NORMAL DUTY STATUS **Pilot**

Section D—OPERATOR'S FLYING EXPERIENCE (including civilian)

FLYING TIME: 1st PILOT OR HOLD STUDENT **1608:00** OTHER PILOT OR OTHER STUDENT **1259:00**

1. TOTAL HOURS **1608:00**

2. HOURS THIS TYPE **67:00**

3. HOURS THIS MODEL **67:00**

4. HOURS LAST 30 DAYS **41:00**

5. HOURS LAST 24 HOURS **14:00**

6. HOURS LAST 24 HOURS **2:00**

7. ACTUAL COMBAT HOURS **107:00** **54:00**

11. AAF SCHOOLS PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED AND DATES: **A/C Training—Marianna AAF Marianna, Fla. 17 Sept 42—29 June 43**

12. Was operator on instruments at time of accident or immediately before?  Yes  No

Section E—PERSONNEL INVOLVED (including operator and all other persons, whether in plane or not)

DUTY AT TIME OF ACCIDENT	NAME (Last Name First)	TYPE OF AERO. RATING (Symbol)	SERIAL No.	GRADE AND BRANCH OF SERVICE	PERM. CLASS. SYMBOL (AAF Reg. 12-1)	ORG. ASSIGNMENT—AIR FORCE OR COMMAND (GROUP NUMBER AND TYPE STATION)	FATAL INJURY		PARACHUTES	
							MINOR INJURY KNOWN	DEATH	USED	SCOTTED
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Capt	WANTELL, THOMAS F. JR.	P	0-806873	Capt. KYANG		11AF123FG Standiford Fld.	4		I	

O. K. FOR FILES  
BY [Signature]

[Handwritten notes]

**Section F--DAMAGE**

Describe briefly the extent of the damage to the aircraft. (If no damage, write "None." If aircraft is missing, write "Missing." If aircraft was totally wrecked, no return)

TO AIRCRAFT

Aircraft totally wrecked

TO ENGINE	1	Wrecked	2	3	4
TO PROPELLER	1	Wrecked	2	3	4

TO PRIVATE PROPERTY (EXPLAIN ON ATTACHMENTS)

**Section G--POWER PLANT FAILURE**

(Use this section of the form if power plant failure was a contributing cause factor in the accident. This must be signed by engineering officer)

1. DURATION OF FLIGHT SINCE LAST TAKE-OFF  
HOURS                      MINUTES

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
ENGINE MODEL				
ENGINE NO.				
ENGINE HOURS SINCE LAST MAJOR OVERHAUL				
DEPOT OR SUB-DEPOT PERFORMING OVERHAUL				
TOTAL ENGINE HOURS				
PROPELLER MODEL				
PROPELLER HOURS SINCE MAJOR OVERHAUL				

STATEMENT OF OPERATOR, IF AVAILABLE, ON BEHAVIOR OF POWER PLANT AND MANIPULATION OF CONTROLS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE FAILURE

STATEMENT OF ENGINEERING OFFICER, MECHANICS, AND OTHERS AS TO WHAT FAILED AND PROBABLE REASONS WHY

OUTSIDE RATING OF FUEL ENGINEERING OFFICER (Name, Grade, and Station)

**Section H--AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL**

(Use this section if materiel failure was a contributing cause factor in the accident. This must be signed by engineering officer)

DESCRIBE THE MATERIEL FAILURE, INCLUDING STATEMENT OF KIND OF FLIGHT AT TIME OF FAILURE AND ALL FACTORS WHICH MIGHT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE FAILURE

1234567

EXCESSIVE OXYGEN  
AND OTHERS

**Section I--SPECIAL EQUIPMENT**

(Use this section if special equipment—parachutes, radio, dinghies, oxygen equipment, fire extinguishers, etc.—was a contributing cause factor in the accident for any reason including failure, misuse, or by reason of not being in the plane)

HOW DID THE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACCIDENT OR TO ITS RESULTS

Oxygen system was not serviced. System was in working order

Section J—AIRPORT AND FACILITIES AND AIRWAY

(Use this section if the airport or its facilities or airway facilities were a contributing factor in the accident, either by inadequacy, condition, or poor maintenance)

1. EXPLAIN

Section K—WEATHER (This must be signed by weather officer of the reporting station.)

1. WHAT WAS THE WEATHER AT THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE ACCIDENT?

CAVU

2. IF WEATHER WAS A FACTOR IN THE ACCIDENT, STATE HOW AND ATTACH COPY OF WEATHER REPORTS

WEATHER OFFICER  
(Name, Grade, and Station)

Section L—GENERAL INFORMATION

1. IF ERROR ON THE PART OF SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE OPERATOR WAS A FACTOR, STATE HOW

2. WHAT WAS THE MISSION?

Ferry and Navigational training 3

3. DID PILOT OBTAIN UPON CLEARING?

Yes  No

4. WERE THERE ANY VIOLATIONS OF ORDERS OR REGULATIONS? (Explain)

Violated AAF Reg. 60-16 Par. 43. However Capt. Mantell was requested by Godman Field Control Tower to investigate objects in the sky, causing this Officer to go above limits of AAF Reg. 60-16

5. DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN OR CONTEMPLATED

6. KIND OF CLEARANCE (AUTHORITY) FROM

FORM 23

10

Lorietta, Ga.

To

Standiford Field, Va.

OR LOCAL

STATION OF LAST DEPARTURE

Lorietta, Ga.

7. IS UR FORM 14 HAS BEEN SUBMITTED ON ANY PARTURE INVOLVED IN THE ACCIDENT, GIVE UR NO. AND DATE

NO

DATE

EXPLAIN FULLY AND ATTACH COPY

8. ARE COPIES OF AAF FORMS 1, 1A, ATTACHED HERETO AS REQUIRED BY AAF REGULATIONS 60-14?

Yes  No

9. ARE PHOTOS ATTACHED?

Yes  No

Section M—DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

1. TELL IN NARRATIVE FORM, IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS NECESSARY, EVERYTHING THAT IS KNOWN ABOUT THE ACCIDENT. BE SURE TO COVER EVERYTHING THAT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE ACCIDENT. INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO PREVENT SIMILAR ACCIDENTS, AN ACTION TABLE

On 7 January 1948 at approximately 1450-1455, Captain Mantell was leading a flight of four (4) P-51 aircraft on a flight from Marietta Air Base, Marietta, Georgia to Standiford Field at Louisville, Kentucky. Nearing Godman Field, Kentucky, the flight was contacted by the Godman Field Control Tower and requested to identify an object in the sky if the mission would permit. Captain Mantell replied that his mission was ferrying aircraft and that he would attempt to identify the object in the sky. Captain Mantell began a maximum climb in left spirals until about 14000 feet and from there a straight climb at maximum, on a compass heading of approximately 220 degrees. No conversation between Captain Mantell and any member of his flight revealed a clue as to his intentions. One pilot left the flight as the climb began, the remaining two discontinued the climb at approximately 22000 feet. When last observed by the wingman Lt. Clements, Captain Mantell was in a maximum climb at 22500 feet, the aircraft in perfect control. Captain Mantell was heard to say in ship to ship conversation that he would go to 25000 feet for about ten minutes and then come down. Transmission was garbled and attempts to contact Captain Mantell by his flight were unanswered. Lt. Clements was the only pilot equipped with an oxygen mask. This flight had been planned and scheduled as a ferry and navigational trip at low level.

Consensus is that Captain Mantell lost consciousness at approximately 25000 feet, the P-51 being trimmed for a maximum climb continued to climb gradually leveling out as increasing altitude caused decrease in power. The aircraft began to fly in reasonably level attitude at about 30000 feet. It then began a gradual turn to the left because of torque, slowly increasing degree of bank as nose depressed, finally began a spiralling dive which resulted in excessive speeds causing gradual disintegration of aircraft which probably began between 10000 and 20000 feet.

Since canopy lock was in place after crash, it is assumed that Captain Mantell made no attempt to abandon the aircraft, and was unconscious at moment of crash or had died from lack of oxygen before aircraft began the spiralling dive from about 30000 feet.

Parts of the aircraft were found as far as six-tenths (estimated) of a mile from central wreckage. The parts were scattered from North to South. The aircraft came straight down in a horizontal position and landed on the left side. The left wing came off while in the air and landed 100 feet from the central wreckage. The aircraft did not slide forward after contact with the ground. Throttle was set at one-fourth open, mixture control in "Idle-Cut-Off", and prop control in "Full Increase RPM".

2. RECOMMENDATIONS: That all pilots be briefed again on use of oxygen and the effects of lack of same. That all pilots be issued properly fitted mask. Another order issued that no pilot go above 12000 feet without oxygen under any circumstances. No aircraft be cleared for Cross-Country unless it be serviced with oxygen.

The engine be sent to Wright Field for further study.

3. ACTION TAKEN: Oxygen classes will start immediately, for all pilots and crew members. All aircraft will be equipped with oxygen. Pilots carry mask, helmet, goggles and gloves on all flights.

STANDIFORD FIELD, KENTUCKY	
DATE: 1/10/48	TIME: 1450
REPORT MADE BY: [Signature]	REPORT MADE AT: [Signature]
REPORT MADE FOR: [Signature]	REPORT MADE BY: [Signature]
REPORT MADE BY: [Signature]	REPORT MADE AT: [Signature]
REPORT MADE FOR: [Signature]	REPORT MADE BY: [Signature]

The flight of the P-51 was begun from the Army Airfield. ...

... contacted with the pilot ...

In one of my transmissions I notified Capt. Mantell that we were ...

As they replied "Look, there it is or there at 1200 o'clock", I was able to discern a bright appearing object, very small, and so far away as to be unable to identify it as to size, shape, color, but it was definitely something which could be seen. Its position was slightly lower and to the left of the sun. This was at approximately 1515. I called Capt. Mantell and told him I could see the object and suggested that since we did not seem to be making a gain on the object, that it would be better if we leveled off and tried to pick up some speed and possibly go under the object. His transmissions were garbled but he mentioned something about going to 25,000 feet 10 minutes and then if we were unable to make any further progress towards the object, we would divert down.

From the time that the high blower kicked in at about 18,000' or up even though I was using these maximum power settings at about 22,000' realizing that it was the high rate climb without oxygen, I broke off the flight out of formation and Capt. Mantell disappeared, still climbing directly into the sun. I called him and informed him that we were breaking off the flight and returning to Staniford Field, but he did not acknowledge. Through the later stages of this climb Lt. Hammond was signaling that he was having trouble because of his lack of oxygen and was coming down to a lower down altitude. From the time we broke off from the formation we began a rather sharp descent back on course to Staniford Field, about 4:00 and finally established contact with Godman Tower giving them a position report and our destination, and asking them if they would try to contact Capt. Mantell and inform him that we were returning, inasmuch as he failed to acknowledge our previous message.

The last contact by radio which we had with Capt. Mantell was when he said he could see the object at 1200 o'clock which was from 20,000' and when last seen he seemed to have the airplane under perfect control and still climbing towards the object. I relayed my thoughts to Godman Tower as to what we had seen and proceeded with Lt. Hammond on my wing to Staniford Field, landing without further incident at approximately 1530. As far as I can recall, the last time we saw Capt. Mantell was approximately 1522. At no time did I observe Capt. Mantell to be in trouble and not until the later stages of the flight, prior to our breaking off of formation, did I realize what the object of this high rate of climb and unusual heading away from our ultimate destination was. By the time that I switched to B Tower control, after we started climbing, we were apparently out of range of the Godman Tower. In conjunction with the last time when we left Capt. Mantell I was led to judge our position to be about 40 miles northwest of Bowling Green.

Albert W. Cleveland  
ALBERT W. CLEVELAND  
1st Lt. SAC. E-428

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

Robert J. D. Johnson  
ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON  
Major, USAF

RESTRICTED

**[REDACTED]**, former Guided Missile expert at Eschmatt, Borsig mentioned that he sighted 1 white point moving from South to North at an approx height of 14 kilometers, speed undetermined, rather fast, no rpt of sound, and no report of exhaust trail.

**WITNESSES:** Dr and Mrs **[REDACTED]**.  
No photographs available.

ARMY AIR FORCES  
 AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE

OPERATING OFFICE  
**A** **MARIETTA ARMY AIR FIELD**

ADDRESS  
**MARIETTA, GEORGIA**

DATE  
**7 Jan 1948**

PILOT'S NAME	RANK	HOME STATION	ORGANIZATION	AIRCRAFT NUMBER
<b>T. F. Mantell Jr.</b>	<b>Capt.</b>	<b>DXL</b>	<b>165th Ftr Sq.</b>	<b>44-63988</b>
I certify that the weight and balance on this aircraft is identical with that shown on Form "F" filed at <b>DXL</b> Date <b>1-18</b> Pilots Int. <b>TFM</b>				
This aircraft is equipped with instruments and flashlight for IFR and Night Flights. Pilots Int. <b>TFM</b>				

LIST ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS ON SEPARATE SHEET

**C. WEATHER DATA** EXISTING LOCAL

ROUTE: **A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY**  
 /s/ **Edwin A. Wood**  
**Edwin A. Wood**  
**Capt. USAF**  
**Operations Officer**

DESTINATION (LATEST): **EDWIN A. WOOD**

ALTERNATE (LATEST): **Operations Officer**

FORECASTS (ESTIMATED FLIGHT TIME PLUS 2 HOURS):

ROUTE: **I have been adequately briefed on the current WX and forecast WX effecting my flight and I understand the WX situation. (S) Thomas Y. Mantell Jr.**  
**PILOTS SIGNATURE**

ALTERNATE: **A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:**  
*[Signature]*  
**Captain Ky ANG**

AAFP FORM 22A REQUIRED:  NOT REQUIRED:  FORECASTER: **VOID 1430G** TIME: **7:00**

FLIGHT PLAN	PILOT COMPLETELY RADIO CALLS	TYPE OF AIRCRAFT	PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY)	POINT OF DEPARTURE	
<b>D PLAN</b>	<b>NO 3869</b>	<b>V P-51</b>	<b>Mantell</b>	<b>Marietta AIF</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/> IFR ALT: <b>DXL</b> ROUTE: <b>DXL</b> TO:	<input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/> IFR ALT: <b>DXL</b> ROUTE: <b>DXL</b> TO:	<input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/> IFR ALT: <b>DXL</b> ROUTE: <b>DXL</b> TO:	<input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/> IFR ALT: <b>DXL</b> ROUTE: <b>DXL</b> TO:	<input type="checkbox"/> VFR <input type="checkbox"/> IFR ALT: <b>DXL</b> ROUTE: <b>DXL</b> TO:	
APPROX. FIRST RETURNED LANDING: <b>DXL</b>	TRUE AIR SPEED: <b>300</b>	TRANSMITTING FREQUENCIES: <b>126.18</b> <b>KB</b> <b>KC</b> <b>KB</b> <b>KC</b>	RECEIVER ONLY: <input type="checkbox"/>	NO BAGG: <input type="checkbox"/>	
PROB. OF TAKEOFF TIME: <b>1330 C</b>	EST. TIME EN ROUTE: <b>1 Hr. 10 Min.</b>	ALTERNATE AIRPORT:	HOURS OF FUEL (CRUISE): <b>3 Plus</b>	INSTRUMENT RATING: <b>None</b>	FLIGHT PRIORITY: <b>3-8</b>
REMARKS - CREW FIXES WHICH WILL BE REPORTED WHILE ON INSTRUMENT FLIGHT: <b>WAAF TRX 396X03 and "B" channel</b>			PILOT'S SIGNATURE: <b>(S) Thomas Y. Mantell Jr.</b>		
TOWER FREQUENCIES: <b>BWC</b>	WEATHER CODE RECEIVED: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	TO DESTINATION: <b>310</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMAND PILOT <input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR PILOT <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRACT PILOT OF CARGO AIRCRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> PILOT		

**FLIGHT CLEARANCE AUTHORIZATION**

ASSENTED TO: <b>AJS</b>	TIME: <b>1430</b>	BY: <b>BC</b>	OPERATIONAL DEFENSE:
ORND APPROVAL RECEIVED:	CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED:		CLEARING AUTHORITY:
INSTRUCTIONS AND APPROVAL TRANSMITTED TO PILOT OR TOWER BY: <b>FM</b>			ACTUAL TAKEOFF TIME: <b>1442Z</b>
<b>ROBERT C. PAUL, COL AF, CO A73/YZ</b>			CLEARANCE OFFICER:



# AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - ENGINEERING

INSPECTION STATUS				SERVICING AND CONDITION OF TAKE-OFF (CHECK IMMEDIATELY BEFORE TAKE-OFF)												
DATE OF HOURS DUE	INSPECTED TODAY			SERVICE	FUEL (GALLONS)		OIL (QUARTS)								RADIATOR CHECKED	
	BY	STATION			SERVICED	IN TANKS	NO. 1		NO. 2		NO. 3		NO. 4			
PREFLIGHT: 12-23-47	0	Standiford														
DAILY: 12-23-47	0															
75 HOURS: 183:40				1ST	0	209	0	40								
50 HOURS: 192:55		field		2ND	67	209	0	40								
100 HOURS: 242:55				3RD												
Battery: Daily	0/1250			4TH												
				5TH												

INSPECTION OF AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT				STATUS TODAY		EXPLANATION
EQUIPMENT	SYMBOL	INSPECTED BY	STATION	1	2	
BOMBARDMENT						
GUNNERY						
CHEMICAL						
COMMUNICATIONS	M	Merke	Standiford Fld.			
PHOTOGRAPHIC						
NAVIGATION						

EXCEPTIONAL RELEASE  
WHEN THE "STATUS TODAY" IS INDICATED BY A RED SYMBOL AND AN "EXCEPTIONAL RELEASE" HAS NOT BEEN GRANTED BY AN AUTHORIZED MAINTENANCE OFFICER, THE PILOT OF THE AIRCRAFT WILL SIGN THIS RELEASE BEFORE FLIGHT.

RELEASED FOR FLIGHT

REMARKS, PILOTS AND MECHANICS - SEE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE FRONT COVER.

Preflight & Daily OK O'Bryan  
# 1 J.L. Carwell 1st. Lt.

AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE TIME RECORD (ENTER IN HOURS AND MINUTES)				
ENGINE	NO. 1	NO. 2	NO. 3	NO. 4
HOURS TO DATE	183:40			
HOURS TODAY	1:10			
TOTAL	184:50			
OIL CHANGE DUE	30			
COMP. CLEANING DUE	183:40			
P-51	HOURS TO DATE	183:40		
AIRCRAFT	HOURS TODAY	1:10		
869	TOTAL	184:50		

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

*Richard L. Tyler*  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain, U.S. Army

# 2 Service by O'Bryan

-6-

DATE	AIRCRAFT ORG. DATA	AIRCRAFT DATA	ENGINE DATA	
12-23-47	AIR FORCE: 11th	COMPONENT: Fighter	ENGINE MODEL: V-1650-7	
STATION: Standiford Fld.	COMP., SERW. COND., OR DEP'T: Ky. ANG	AIRCRAFT MODEL: P-51D-20-NA	SERIAL NO.: V-328630	SERIAL NO.:
CREW CHIEF OR ENGINEER: O'Bryan	GROUP, NO. & TYPE: 123rd. Ftr. Co.	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO.: 44-63869	SERIAL NO.:	SERIAL NO.:
	SQUADRON NO. & TYPE: 165th Ftr. Sqd.		TOTAL FLIGHT TIME: 1:10	

# AIRCRAFT FLIGHT REPORT - OPERATIONS

DATE 1-7-46	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND 11th	BASE UNIT OR GROUP TITLE & TYPE 123rd Fighter Gr. (NG)	SQUADRON NO. & TYPE 165th Fighter Sqd	STATION Standiford Field
ENGINEER OR MECHANIC IN CHARGE - NAME AND GRADE JOHN L. O'BRYAN S/SGT		AIRCRAFT TYPE, MODEL, SERIES P-51W	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO. 44-83869	

NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) - Grade - ASN - (Organization & Station if Transient)	USE AS DIRECTED LOCALLY	ENTER DUTY SYMBOL IN UPPER LEFT BOX & FLIGHT CONDITIONS SYMBOL IN UPPER RIGHT BOX - EXTEND TIME FLOWN ON LINE THEREAFTER										FLIGHT DATA		TIME				
		DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.		MISSION	NO. OF LANDINGS		
MANTELL, THOMAS F. JR. CAPT. KY ANO															TO DXL FROM DNY	1 1520 1 1340		
* Aircraft crashed at Franklin, Ky at 1518 CST 7 January 1946		Original form lost in crash Pilot's watch stopped at 1516 CST establishing time of crash										T-18F	*	1:40				
A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:  <i>Richard L. Tyler</i> RICHARD L. TYLER Captain Ky ANO																		
<i>Vol H 4</i>		ENTER TOTAL FLIGHT TIME ON REVERSE SIDE										SUB-TOTAL FORWARDED	*	1:40				

185TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (ANG)  
Standiford Field  
P. O. Box 1167  
Louisville, Kentucky

18 January 1948

Listed below are the previous write ups on aircraft P-51, 44-63869:

10-24-47 Rudder trim indicates 5° too much to the right. Rudder trim set 3° to the left—O'Bryan 10-25-47

11-6-47 Coolant leak. Header tank removed, crack welded and tank reinstalled. Replaced all hose with new hose. Plane run up and checked OK for flight—O'Bryan. Work checked & plane found OK for flight (C.T. Baker Flight chief) 11-6-47

11-8-47 Coolant leak. Coolant leak stopped by Vermillion. 100 hr. inspection completed. Work checked & plane found OK for flight (C.T. Baker Flight chief) 11-14-47

11-19-47 KC receiver VERY weak noisy, caused by fuel pump booster. OK when pump off. Detroit 200-400 KC receiver checked OK on ground. (Marks & Duncan) 11-23-47

11-23-47 Compass swing due. Compass swung by Baker 12-17-47

12-12-47 25 hour inspection completed by C.T. Baker & crew. 12-12-47

12-18-47 "A" channel very weak. No "B" channel. Radio VHF retuned, checked OK. Marks. 12-19-47

Forms 1, 1A were destroyed in crash. 11-23-47 is last original forms obtainable.

117

-18-

Incl. 10-

12 January 1948

Subject: Compiled Report Concerning  
Major Accident of Capt.  
T.F. Mantell, Jr. on 7 Jan.  
1948 at 1518 CST.

TO: Whom It May Concern

1. This report will be informal and fragmentary, but it is accurate to the best of my knowledge. The mission of the transport was to fly four ferry pilots, volunteer pilots of the guard, to Marietta Army Air Base where they were to pick up four P-51's that were left there because of weather 30 December 1947.

2. Upon arrival at Marietta the four P-51's were preflighted by mechanics flown there on the same transport, for that purpose. Capt. Mantell filed a VFR clearance to Standiford Field at Louisville. The flight took off and I watched them form and proceed north in formation at about 400 feet.

3. Upon arrival of our C-47 at Standiford at 1615 CST on 7 January 1948 we were met by mechanics who told us about flying objects, and that our P-51's were after something and that is all we gathered. In operations about 1700 CST a phone call was received by Major Boyle that the plane had crashed near Franklin and the pilot killed.

4. At 1730 I was back in the air in the C-47 enroute to Bowling Green where I was to get transportation to Franklin. I had mechanics, an Administration Specialist, and a co-pilot second. We arrived at 1815 CST at Bowling Green and proceeded to Franklin via Highway patrol car.

5. At the scene of the accident we carried out as much of an investigation that was possible at night. We had affidavits from Mrs. Phillips.

1235000

7

accident report.

Mr. [REDACTED] and two boys who watched the plane come down. Our formal accident report is awaiting action by the investigation board that will meet at Standiford in the next 48 hours.

A Summary of my opinion of the cause of the accident is compiled through what I have heard from various sources and affidavits concerning the accident.

As Capt. Mantell passed near Godman Field he switched to B channel to call Standiford Tower, the message was intercepted at Godman tower and he was directed to attempt to find out what the object was that they were watching. Lt. Hendricks, who was on Mantell's wing was in a hurry to get to Standiford, so he asked to break off and was given permission by Mantell. Clements moved up and could see Mantell was talking so he switched from C channel to B channel.... Mantell spiraled down at high power setting and finally took a heading of about 270 degrees and was climbing about 180 MPH. Parts of the conversation between Mantell and Clements was that Mantell thought the object was traveling about the speed he was climbing. At 22,500 feet Clements told Mantell they were getting too high, Clements wingman, Lt. Hammond had no oxygen and was getting dizzy. Clements luckily had a plane that had some oxygen in it and he was wearing his mask because he could use a mask better for transmission than he could a throat mike. When Clements had reported to Mantell that he was turning back Mantell told him they would go to 25,000 feet level off, fly 10 minutes and then go down. When Clements broke off with his wingman at about 23,000 he called Mantell and informed him he had left and Mantell's reply was garbled. Clements last seen Mantell heading into the sun climbing at high power. Clements and Lt. Hammond landed at Standiford and Clements refueled and took off again at 1625 CST, climbing to and the Franklin, Kt. area. Upon reaching 33,000 feet he reported over B channel that he was at 33,000 feet and didn't see a thing.... this was about 1625 or 1630 CST. Clements left a vapor trail near Franklin on the way south and passed under it on the way back north.

1235300

-8-

Accident, Major

At about 1600 CST, two pilots, flying a Reynolds Metal C-47 were on VHF B channel, over Bardstown, Ky. when they heard someone say they were at 33,000 feet and couldn't see anything. They landed at Bowman Field, Louisville about 1615 CST.

7. My personal opinion of the accident is that Mantell, an aggressive pilot, attempted to pursue the object as long as possible, even though he realized his danger from lack of oxygen. At about 25,000 feet I believe he passed out from anoxia and the plane continued climbing to about 30,000 feet where it done three lazy circles and went into a power dive, slowly rotating to the left with the engine torous. I believe that he reached compressibility at about 15,000 feet and the left wing blew off, part started coming off and raining down for nearly a mile in a north to south direction, scattering the lightest part the farthest away. I think the pilot was dead of anoxia when he started down. When the left wing came off, the right wing acted as a fin or rudder for the fuselage and guided the fuselage straight down, parallel to the ground. The plane did not burn upon impact. The pilots watch shattered at 1513 CST.

8. Captain Mantell was graduated from a single Engine school, AT-6...he was out in a Free Carrier outfit...trained in the States...went overseas to North Africa...from there to England... was in D day invasion, Normandy...flew the Holland mission...flew the Rhine crossing mission...during his time he flew transition in B-24's and C-47's. Back in the States at Bergstrom he taught Chinese cadets in the C-46. He was discharged about Nov. 20, 1945. His terminal leave was up about Jan. 20, 1947...the 21st day of March Capt. Mantell started in business as part owner of a flight school, Elkins-Mantell Flying School, Bowman Field, Louisville, Ky. He was federally recognized in the Air National Guard about the 10th of February, 1947. He started flying the B-51 about May of 1947 and built his time to around 7,000 hours up until his death. He was a flight leader. His military time was approximately 2300 hours, his civilian time was around 700 hours.

100000

Accident, Major

9. Captain Mantell's home life was normal. He had a wife and two boys...one 18 months and one about 6 years... I was Mantell's closest friend and can vouch that he never had any personal problems, except the normal business worries, which were unknown to me if he had any of that type. His interest in flying could not be excelled. He loved the F-51, felt he was the master of it, and flew...not carelessly but like an aggressive fighter pilot. I firmly believe that if he thought he had any chance of catching this object he would have pursued it knowingly to his death. I think he seen somet ing more than a star or balloon...he was above average intelligent. He did respect the airplane and the dangers of anoxia. If some outside force did not cause his death, I think he passed out too quickly to change his line of flight. Mantell was six foot, weighed 190 lbs. A husky, well-build man.

*Richard D. Ely*  
MICHAEL D. ELY,  
Captain, NY, ANG,  
Operations Officer &  
Investigator of the  
Accident.

HEADQUARTERS  
315TH AF BASE UNIT (RES TNG)  
GODMAN FIELD, FORT KNICK, KENTUCKY

A/ing

15 January 1948

STATEMENT T/SGT QUINTON BLACKWELL

On the afternoon of 7 January 1948 I was on duty in the Control Tower, Godman Field, as Chief Operator. We had been sighting an object in the sky which we were unable to identify from our position in the tower.

At approximately 1430 hours we sighted a 4-ship formation of P-51's approaching Godman from the southeast heading towards Louisville. As they crossed over Godman Field, I attempted to contact the flight of ships in the following manner:

"Godman Tower Calling the flight of 4 ships northbound over Godman Field. Do you read? Over?"

I gave that call twice and finally after the second call-up the Flight Leader of the formation acknowledged, "Roger, Godman Tower. This is National Guard 869, Flight Leader of the formation. Over".

"National Guard 869 from Godman Tower. We have an object out south of Godman here that we are unable to identify, and we would like to know if you have gas enough; and if so could you take a look for us if you will."

The Flight Leader acknowledged, "Roger, I have the gas and I will take a look for you if you give me the correct heading and any information you have on locating the object".

One of the four ships continued on towards Louisville. 3 of them swung around to the right and reversed their course, making good a heading of approximately 210° from Godman Field, and climbing steadily.

At about 1445 or 1450 hours, National Guard 869 notified Godman Tower he was approximately 15,000 feet.

"I have an object in sight above and ahead of me, and it appears to be moving at about half my speed or approximately 180 miles an hour."

When asked for a description of the object, he replied, "It appears to be a metallic object or possibly reflection of sun from a metallic object, and it is of tremendous size."

Approximately 1515 or 1520 hours, the Flight Leader reported the object as, "Directly ahead of me and slightly above, and is now moving at about my speed or better. I am trying to close in for a better look."

That was the last contact we had with the Flight Leader in any way.

Very soon after that National Guard 800 who was in the flight with National Guard 869, attempted to contact the Flight Leader and when he was unable to do so announced that he was returning to Standiford Field, as he was unable to contact or locate his Flight Leader.



JANUARY 1954

The flight of four P-51s was begun from Marietta Army Airbase, Marietta, Georgia. Each pilot started his engine about 1330 CST, and immediately switched his radio to B Baker channel. Capt. Mantell, who was to lead the flight, contacted the tower and obtained take-off instructions and the flight was conducted as follows: Lt. Hendricks, Lt. Hammond, Lt. Williams, Lt. [unclear] leading the second element with Lt. Hammond as the element wingman. The first two elements were off the ground at about 1332, followed by the second two a minute later. Following a join-up in regular fourship formation, the flight proceeded on course towards Louisville, climbing up to 5,000' and leveling off at this altitude. Capt. Mantell signaled for a channel switch to #3 G Charlie channel.

The flight proceeded without incident until over the Lake Mead Reservoir at which point Capt. Mantell signaled for intrail formation and proceeded to drop down and make two 360° orbits over the Reservoir and then climbed back up to 5000' and proceeded on course again. The flight again proceeded without further incident to a point about five miles north of Godman Field. Godman Field was slightly off course and the flight drifted off to the right making contact with the O. in [unclear] north of Godman Field. At this point Lt. Hendricks, #2 was, broke away from the formation and headed towards Standiford Field. Capt. Mantell immediately after this began a rather sharp spiraling climb to the right at rather high power settings necessitating a power setting of 47" MP and 2700 RPM to maintain position in the formation with him. He continued spiraling at about 14000' where he broke off the spiral and headed on a south-westerly heading of approximately 230°, still climbing at the maximum rate of 180 LBS. At about 15000' I put on my oxygen mask and began taking oxygen because it became apparent that Capt. Mantell was heading for much higher altitudes even though it was known before hand that he did not have oxygen equipment and neither did the element wingman Lt. Hammond. The flight continued on this south-westerly course and at about 16000' I attempted to pull up fairly close to the flight leader and try to signal him with hand motions and try to contact him on B Baker channel noting where the flight was headed. Capt. Mantell had at no time signaled for a change over to B Baker channel which is always customary from the flight leader, either visual signal or on the radio.

In one of my transmissions I notified Capt. Mantell that we were considerably over our MIA for Standiford Field and suggested that he notify Godman Field to relay our position to Flight Service to which he replied "Roger". However, I failed to lead Capt. Mantell contact Godman Field on this. In the next few minutes I heard Capt. Mantell say "Look", there's a town down there with an airport beside it".

123500.

*Handwritten signature*

[REDACTED]  
UNCLASSIFIED

Unidentified Missile

MCIAXS

MCIAXF-2

24 May 48

1

Information has been received from Headquarters, EUCOM to the effect that during a routine conversation on 24 April 1948, a Doctor [REDACTED], former Guided Missile expert at Borsig, mentioned that he sighted a white point moving from South to North at an approximate height of 14 kilometers; speed undetermined, rather fast; no sound and no exhaust trail. Location and time of sighting: Berlin-Lichtenrade, Kirchbachstrasse 2; 1630 hours, 28 March 1948. Weather: clear. Witnesses: Doctor and Mrs. [REDACTED]. Photographs are not available.

LELAND P. MONEY  
Chief, Liaison Section  
Tech Intelligence Div  
Intelligence Department

WRD/fd  
2-2125  
Bldg 11A  
Rm 267

-----

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

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

and from previous flying in this area I recognized it to be the town of Bowling Green with its airport to the south east, and at this point I noted that we were at 20000' and still climbing. I called Capt. Mantell and notified that this was Bowling Green and again asked him what we were looking for. He then replied "Look, there is it out there at 1200 o'clock," and I was able to discern a bright appearing object, very small, and so far away as to be unable to identify it as to size, shape, color, but it was definitely something which could be seen. Its position was slightly lower and to the left of the sun. This was at approximately 1515. I called Capt. Mantell and told him I could see the object but suggested that since we did not seem to be making a gain on the object, that it would be better if we leveled off and tried to pick up some speed and possibly get under the object. His transmissions were garbled but he mentioned something about going to 25000' for about 10 minutes and then if we were unable to make any further progress towards the object, we could drop down.

From the time that the high blowed kicked in at about 18000' Capt. Mantell did not seem to decrease the throttle leading to correspond with this and began pulling away from us at 18000' on up even though I was using these maximum power settings. At about 18500', realizing that it was too high to maintain without oxygen, I broke off the climb out of formation and Capt. Mantell disappeared, still climbing almost directly into the sun. I called him and informed him that we were breaking off the flight and returning to Standiford Field, but he did not acknowledge. Through the later stages of this climb Lt. Hanson was indicating that he was having trouble because of his lack of oxygen and wished to go down to a lower altitude. From the time we broke off from the formation, we began a rather sharp descent back on course to Standiford Field, about 400', and finally established contact with Godman tower giving them a position report and our location in regard to what they would try to contact. Capt. Mantell and I informed him that we were returning, in as much as we failed to acknowledge our previous message.

The last contact radio which we had with Capt. Mantell was when he said he could see the object at 1200 o'clock which was from 10 o'clock and when I saw that seen he asked to have the airplane under perfect control and still climbing towards the object. I relayed my thoughts to Godman tower saying that we had seen and proceeded with Lt. Hanson on my way to Standiford Field, heading south on the 11th of an altitude of approximately 15400'. As near as I can recall, the last time we saw Capt. Mantell was approximately 1620'. At no time did I observe Capt. Mantell to be in trouble and certainly the later stages of the flight, prior to our breaking off of formation, did I realize what the object of the high rate of climb and climb leading away from our destination was. By the time that I switched to B Tower channel, after we started climbing, we were apparently out of range of the Godman tower. In conjunction with the last message we left Capt. Mantell I would judge our position to be about 40 miles north west of Bowling Green.

Albert W. Clements.  
Capt. U.S. Army

January 7, 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, Glenn T. Hayes of Route 3, Simpson County, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky do state that on January 1, 1948 at approximately three-thirty P.M. I heard an airplane overhead making a funny noise as if he were diving down and pulling up, but it wasn't, it was just circling. Within about three circles the airplane started into a power dive slowly rotating. The plane was so high I could hardly see it when it started down, it started to make a terrific noise, ever increasing as it descended. It exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. No fire was seen. It hit or crashed at three-twenty P.M. Central. It didn't explode when it hit the ground and did not burn.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my home on Route 3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Glenn T. Hayes  
Route 3, Lake Spring Road  
Franklin, Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain KY ANG  
Summary Court Officer

BE CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

*Richard L. Tyler*  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain KY ANG

1235000

*J. C. 4/2*

AFFIDAVIT

7 January 1948  
5 miles South West of  
Franklin, Kentucky on  
W. J. Phillips Farm

I, Mrs. Carey Phillips was sitting in my front room when I heard one explosion, ran to my front window and saw an airplane crash into my left front yard, about two hundred and fifty yards from my home. The airplane did not burn and did not explode after it hit the ground.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my home on Route 43, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

Mrs. Carrie A. Phillips

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Richard E. Tyler  
RICHARD E. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG  
Summary Court Officer

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

*Richard E. Tyler*  
RICHARD E. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG

AFFIDAVIT

*Index # 10*

1233000

76-

AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, William C. Hayes of Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky, Simpson County do state that on 7 January 1948 at approximately three-fifteen P.M. I heard an airplane overhead making a funny noise as if he were diving down, and pulling up, but it wasn't, it was just circling. After about three circles the airplane started into a power dive slowly rotating. The plane was so high I could hardly see it when it started down. It started to make a terrific noise, ever increasing, as it descended. It exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. No fire was seen. It hit or crashed at three-twenty P.M. Central. It didn't explode when it hit the ground and did not burn.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my home on Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

William C. Hayes  
Route #3, Lake Spring Road  
Franklin, Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January, 1948.

Richard E. Tyler  
RICHARD E. TYLER  
Captain, KY, 213  
Summary Court Officer

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

Richard E. Tyler  
RICHARD E. TYLER  
Captain, KY, 213  
Summary Court Officer

AFFIDAVIT

8 January 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, William J. Phillips do hereby state that none of my buildings or  
apparatuses were damaged in any way by crash of aircraft piloted by  
Captain Thomas R. Mantell Jr. Kentucky National Guard when it  
crashed in my field one hundred and fifty yards to the left of my home.

/s/ William J. Phillips

Witness: 1. /s/ Douglas J. McGill

1170 Central Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

2. /s/ Richard L. Tyler

1217 Congress Street, Louisville, Kentucky

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

*Richard L. Tyler*  
✓

8

*Handwritten notes*

ARMY AIR FORCES  
AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE

OPERATIONS OFFICE  
ADDRESS  
BILTA ARMY AIR FIELD  
ARIETTA, GEORGIA

DATE  
7 Jan 1948

PILOT'S NAME: **T.F. Mantell Jr. O-006873** RANK: **Capt** HOME STATION: **DLI** ORGANIZATION: **1st Lt For Sq.** AIRCRAFT NUMBER: **44-63862**

NAME, INITIALS, RANK, HOME STATION OR OTHER OCCUPANTS  
**H.A. Hendricks 1st Lt. O-2063831 73336**  
**A.W. Clements 1st Lt. O-732166 73800**  
**H.A. Hammond 2nd Lt. O-2083716 73777**

I certify that the weight and balance on this aircraft is identical with that shown on Form "F" filed at  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ Pilots Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

This aircraft is equipped with instruments and flashlight for IFR and Night flights  
Pilots Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

LIST ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS ON SEPARATE SHEET

**C WEATHER DATA** EXISTING LOCAL ROUTE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DESTINATION (LATEST): \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ALTERNATE (LATEST): \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_  
FORECASTS (ESTIMATED FLIGHT TIME PLUS 2 HOURS): \_\_\_\_\_  
ROUTE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DESTINATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
I have been adequately briefed on the current (S) and forecast (Y) affecting my flight and I understand the (X) situation.  
ALTERNATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
WINDS ALONG ROUTE: \_\_\_\_\_  
AAAF FORM 133A REQUIRED:  NOT REQUIRED:  FORECASTER: \_\_\_\_\_ VOID: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

**D FLIGHT PLAN** PILOT COMPLETES RADIO CALLS: **DLI 3869** TYPE OF AIRCRAFT: **P51** PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY): **Mantell** POINT OF DEPARTURE: **ARIETTA AFB**  
1. ALT: **772** 2. ALT: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. ALT: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. ALT: \_\_\_\_\_  
CPR: **Drop** CPR: \_\_\_\_\_ CPR: \_\_\_\_\_ CPR: \_\_\_\_\_  
ROUTE: **DLI** ROUTE: \_\_\_\_\_ ROUTE: \_\_\_\_\_ ROUTE: \_\_\_\_\_  
AIRPORT OF FIRST INTENDED LANDING: **DLI** TRANSMITTING FREQUENCIES: **126.18 83.5 AC A**  
PROPOSED TAKE OFF TIME: **1330 G** ALTERNATE REPORT: **1 Hr. 10 Min.** INSTRUMENT RATING: **3 Plus** FLIGHT PRIORITY: **3-2**  
REMARKS SHOW FIXES WHICH WILL BE REPORTED WHILE ON INSTRUMENT FLIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_  
PILOT'S SIGNATURE: **(S) Thomas P. Mantell Jr.**  
TO AIR FORCE: **AAF TR 396 RLS and 1st Channel** TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
DESTINATION: **310** ALTERNATE: \_\_\_\_\_ COMMAND: \_\_\_\_\_ SENIOR: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTRACT PILOT OF: \_\_\_\_\_  
PILOT: \_\_\_\_\_ CARGO AIRCRAFT: \_\_\_\_\_

**FLIGHT CLEARANCE AUTHORIZATION**  
APPROVED FOR: **AFB 1120 RC** OPERATIONS IDENTIFICATION NO.: \_\_\_\_\_  
THE APPROVAL RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
INSTRUCTIONS AND APPROVAL TRANSMITTED TO PILOT: **1120** ACTUAL TAKE OFF TIME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ROBERT L. Grooms, JR., COL AF, CO. **AFB/11**



Transmittal of D. A. Form 1.

301  
~~301~~ (22 Jan 48) 3rd Ind.  
HQ, AIR DEFENSE COMMAND, MITCHELL AIR FORCE BASE, N.Y.

THRU: Chief, National Guard Bureau, Washington, D. C.

TO: Chief, Flying Safety Division, United States Air Force, Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

The findings of the Aircraft Accident Investigating Board are con-  
current with this report.

This accident will be brought to the attention of all pilots under  
the jurisdiction of this command.

*R. J. Baward*

12 Incls. 3/01

CSUGB 4th Ind.

Hq., Dept. of the Army, SS, USA, National Guard Bureau, Washington 25, D. C.  
11 Jan 48

THRU: Office of the Air Inspector, United States Air Force, Washington 25, D. C.  
ATTN: Major J. C. King

TO: Chief of Staff, USAF, Office of the Air Inspector, Flying Safety  
Division, Langley Field, Virginia

The National Guard Bureau concurs with recommendations of the  
Aircraft Accident Investigating Board and action taken by the Senior  
Air Instructor.

FOR THE CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU:

W. A. R. ROBERTSON  
Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Aviation Group  
National Guard Bureau

BASIC: Str, Office of Senior Air Instructor, Ky Air NG, Louisville, KY. SUBJECT:  
"Transmittal of WD AF Form 14," Cont'd.

1-31  
Ind.

RIM: tld

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY, MILITARY DEPARTMENT, AGO, Frankfort, 29 January 1948.

TO: Commanding General, 11th AF, 1612 S Cameron Street, Harrisburg, Pa.

Paragraph 2, basic communication, complied with.

*Roscoe L. Murray*  
ROSCOE L. MURRAY,  
Brigadier General, Ky. N.G.,  
The Adjutant General.

12 Incls:  
n/c

Off of Senior Air Instr, Ky Air NG to Adj. Gen., Commonwealth of Ky. Division AS  
Subject: Transmittal of WD AF Form 14.

DATE: 30-30

BY: [Signature] [Name], Harrisburg, Pa.

TO: Commanding General, Air Defense Command, Mitchell Field, Westhampton,  
New York.

Recommendations of the [Name] [Title] [Agency] [Action]  
taken by the [Name] [Title] [Agency], [Action]

*[Signature]*  
[Name]  
[Title]

12 Incls: n/c

44-1-7-1

OFFICE OF THE AIR INSTRUCTOR  
Kentucky Air National Guard  
Stanford Field  
P. O. Box 23, Camp Taylor Branch  
Louisville 13, Kentucky

22 January 1948

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AD AS Form 14

TO : Adjutant General, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Frankfort, Kentucky

1. Transmitted herewith in accordance with CG Air Memorandum 62-44, dated 11 August 1947 is AD AS Form 14 and allied papers pertaining to aircraft accident 7 January 1948 involving P-51H type aircraft, serial number 44-63263, the aircraft piloted by Captain Thomas F. Mantell Jr. ASN O 80093, Pilot.

2. Recommend that all pilots be completely indoctrinated in the proper utilization of oxygen equipment, also that the flight surgeon familiarize all rated personnel with known ill effects of anoxia.

*Robert A. Scott*  
ROBERT A. SCOTT  
Colonel USAF  
Senior Air Instructor

- 12 Incls:--
1. Statement of William J. Phillips
  2. AD AS Form 23
  3. AD AS Form 1A
  4. AD AS Form 14
  5. List of previous writings on Form 14
  6. Statement of Investigating Officer
  7. Statement of Godman Field Control Tower Operator
  8. Statement of Lt. Clements
  9. Statement of Glenn T. Hayes
  10. Statement of Mrs. Carrie A. Phillips
  11. Statement of William C. Hayes
  12. Photographs of accident

1235603

51-

REPORT OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATION OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT  
INVOLVING P-51D NO. 44-63869

1. DATE AND TIME OF ACCIDENT: 7 January 1948, 1518 CST.
2. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT: 5 miles southwest of Franklin, Kentucky.
3. AIRCRAFT: P-51D No. 44-63869
4. HOME STATION AND ORGANIZATION: 165th Fighter Squadron, Kentucky ANG, Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky
5. RESULTS TO AIRCRAFT: Demolished
6. HISTORY OF AIRCRAFT AND ENGINES:

AIRCRAFT

Date of manufacture - 15 December 1944  
Total hours - 16:50, 23 December 1947, EST 9:35 to time of crash  
Date last overhaul - new

ENGINES

Model - V-1650-7  
Number - V-328830  
Total hours - 17:25  
Hours since last overhaul - new

PROPELLER

Model - Hamilton Hydraulic  
Hours since last overhaul - new

7. PILOT, HOME STATION AND ORGANIZATION: Thomas F. Mantell Jr., Captain, O-306073, 123rd Fighter Group, 165th Fighter Squadron, Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky

8. PILOT HISTORY:

	<u>1st Pilot</u>	<u>Other</u>
Total hours	1608:00	559:00
Hours this type	67:00	00:00
Hours this model	67:00	00:00
Hours last 90 days	41:00	00:00
Hours last 30 days	14:00	00:00
Hours last 24 hours	2:00	00:00
Actual Combat hours	107:00	34:00

9. COPILOT HISTORY: Not applicable

10. FLIGHT ENGINEER AND NAVIGATOR NAMES, HOME STATION, ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY:

Not applicable

RESTRICTED

UNCLASSIFIED

**AIR TECHNICAL SERVICE COMMAND**  
**CLASSIFIED CABLE AND MESSAGE SECTION-ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE**

**INCOMING MESSAGE**

May 1948

IN 062222Z

**PRIORITY**

\*Paraphrase not required. Handle as  
correspondence  
per paragraph 51 i and 60a (4), AR 380-5"

FROM: WASHINGTON 061900Z EUCCM SGT HUEBNER

TO: WP AFB  
CSUSA FOR CSGID PASSES TO COMGENAMC WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB ATTN MCI

IN REPLY CITE: WAR SVC 6480 (RELAYS MSG DTG 051716Z) (Cited ECGID nr SX 5533)

Info USAFE for A-2. Reference control number A-1917. During routine conversation on 24 April, 1948, 1 Doctor [redacted], former Guided Missile expert at REINMETALL Borsig, mentioned that he sighted 1 white point moving from South to North at an approximate height of 14 Kilometers; speed undetermined, rather fast; no rpt no sound and no rpt no exhaust trail. Location and time of sighting: Berlin-Lichtenrade, Kirchbachstrasse 2; 1630 hours, 28 March 1948. Weather: CLEAR. Witnesses: Doctor and Mrs [redacted]. Photographs not rpt not available.

NOTE: 2330 Hrs 6 May 1948 No action taken - Hold until morning, 5/7/48

CM-IN 2088-F - JB 070215Z

Received MCAAGM21 5/7/48 0819 (1319Z)

Typed by MCAAGM21 5/7/48 0940 (1440Z) vms

DISTRIBUTION: EJK

1. MCI - Action - transferred to MCIA per MCI 5-7
2. MCAAGM21
3. MCIAXB - Attn: Col Beam - Info

INFORMATION COPY

UNCLASSIFIED

COPY No. 3

THE MAKING OF AN EXACT COPY OF THIS MESSAGE IS FORBIDDEN 2-24786

Only such extracts as are absolutely necessary will be made and marked **CONFIDENTIAL**. This copy will be safeguarded with the greatest care and will be returned to **CLASSIFIED CABLE & MESSAGE SECTION** without delay.

1. Statement of Mr. [REDACTED]

2. Statement of Mr. Robert E. [REDACTED]

3. Statement of Mr. [REDACTED]

4. Statement of Mr. [REDACTED]

5. Statement of [REDACTED]

6. Statement of [REDACTED]

7. Statement of [REDACTED]

8. Statement of [REDACTED]

9. Sketch of scene of accident

1235889

-39-

RESTRICTED R4-C

3 January 1948

*RESTRICTED*  
P-51 NO. 44-63869

Aircraft were not serviced with oxygen as none was available at this station.

Pilots of aircraft did not request oxygen on checking in with line chief or operations.

Subject aircraft was fully serviced with 100/130 octane fuel - right, left and fuselage tanks were serviced. Oil was checked on all aircraft and those serviced requiring same.

Aircraft arrived this station on 29th December 1947, service was accomplished this date.

Aircraft were preflighted on 6th January 1948 by alert crew. Same were dated and preflighted by crew brought from Standiford Field on date of departure - 7th January 1948.

No mechanical trouble was reported on any of the aircraft.

s/ Bernard M. Dwyer  
Major, AC (NO)

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

*Robert J. Dwyer*  
Robert J. Dwyer  
Major, USAF

41  
*RESTRICTED*

AFFIDAVIT

January 1948  
5 miles southwest of  
Franklin, Kentucky on  
W. J. Phillips Farm

I, Mrs. [REDACTED] was sitting in my front room when I heard an  
explosion, ran to my front window and saw an airplane crash into my  
left front yard, about two-hundred and fifty yards from my home. The  
airplane did not burn and did not explode after it hit the ground.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my  
home on Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of  
January 1948.

[REDACTED]  
Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky AND  
Sentry Court Officer

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Richard L. Tyler  
Captain Ky AND

RECORDED



AFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, [redacted] of Route #3, Simpson County, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky do state that on 7 January 1948 at approximately three-fifteen P.M. I heard an airplane overhead making a funny noise as if he were diving down, and pulling up, but it wasn't, it was just circling. After about three circles the airplane started into a power dive slowly rotating. The plane was so high I could hardly see it when it started down. It started to make a terrific noise, ever increasing, as it descended. It exploded half way between where it started the dive and the ground. No fire was seen. It hit or crashed at three-twenty P.M. Central. It didn't explode when it hit the ground and did not burn.

In witness whereof, I have hereinto set my hand and seal at my home on Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January, 1948.

[redacted]  
Route #3, Lake Spring Road  
Franklin, Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

s/Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain, KY ANG  
Summary Court Officer

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

s/Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG

46

EXHIBIT

HEADQUARTERS, 123RD FIGHTER GROUP (ANG)  
STANDIFORD, FIELD  
P.O. Box 1157  
Louisville, Kentucky

A flight of four P-51 departed Marietta, Georgia at 1342 G direct to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Captain Thomas Mantell was in the lead ship as flight leader.

The flight was off course slightly to the left and therefore came over Godman Field on a course of about 45 degrees. I, Lt. Robert K. Hendricks, flying in the number two position was on channel C as we had been the entire trip, when I noticed Captain Mantell was talking so I went over to channel B.

The only part of the conversation between Captain Mantell and Godman Field that I heard was as follows, "We would like for you to take a look at it, come over the field on a heading of 330° and we will try to guide you." Captain Mantell answered "Roger, I'll give you a call when I identify it."

Upon hearing this I requested permission to leave the flight to return to Standiford Field, the request was granted by Captain Mantell, I left the flight at approximately 1440 G and landed at Standiford at 1501 G.

The above statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

s/Robert K. Hendricks  
ROBERT K. HENDRICKS  
1st Lt. Kentucky ANG

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

  
ROBERT J. D. JOHNSON  
Major, USAF

1230003

4 7

RESTRICTED



FLIGHT SERVICE OFFICES  
Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama  
Operating Location 35-0

DATE 8 January 1948

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident

TO: Field Office of the Air Inspector, Langley Field, Virginia  
Army Flying Safety Division,  
Commanding Officer, Flight Service, Washington 25, D.C.  
Commanding Officer, 104th Weather Squadron, Warner Robins, Georgia

1. Flight Plan: MD 3869, A P-51's, Mantell, Marietta, Ga. VFR to Standiford Fld, Louisville, Ky, airspeed 300 mph, VHF Channels A and B, departed 1342G, 7 January 1948, one hr, 10 min enroute, 3 hrs fuel aboard, pilot rating A-2. Additional identity BG 13336, 3800 and 3757.

2. Date, time and scene of accident: 7 January 1948, approximately 1645G,

4.5 miles south of Franklin, Ky. 86° 35' W, 36° 40' N.

3. Flight Service Clearance: (Yes) (No) (See attached) (If "Yes" attach copy - If "K" Explain why)

4. ATIS Clearance: (Yes) (No)

5. Flight Advisory: (Yes) (No) (See attached) (If "Yes" Explain why) No advisory deemed necessary as there were no known hazards to the flight.

6. Position Report: 30 Miles SW of Standiford Fld, Louisville, Ky at 1400

7. Remarks: (See attached)

8. Narrative Summary of conditions in force: See attached sheet.

3

1. FS Form 23-1

2. Pertinent Weather

3. Narrative Summary

4. Form 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

REMI J. F. McQUISTON

Major, USAF

Commanding

AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948.  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, William O. Myres of Route #1, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky, Simpson County do state that on 7 January 1948 at approximately three-fifteen P.M. I heard an airplane overhead making a funny noise as if it were diving down, and pulling up, but it wasn't, it was just circling. After about three circles the airplane started into a power dive slowly rotating. The plane was so high I could hardly see it when it started down. It started to make a terrific noise, ever increasing, as it descended. It exploded halfway between where it started the dive and the ground. No fire was seen. It hit or crashed at three-twenty P.M., Central. It didn't explode when it hit the ground and did not burn.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at my home on Route #1, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

s/William O. Myres  
Route #1, Lake Spring Road  
Franklin, Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me  
this 7th day of January 1948.

s/Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG  
Summary Court Officer

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG

A TESTAMENT

7 January 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, [REDACTED] of Simpson County, Franklin, Kentucky, in examining the dead body of Captain Thomas H. Martell Jr. do state that the shattered watch of Captain Martell stopped at 3:18 P.M. Central, which I fix as the time of death of Captain Martell.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Simpson County,  
Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me,  
this 7th day of January 1948.

s/Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky AGC  
Sagmary Court Officer

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/Richard L. Tyler  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky AGC

49

AFFIDAVIT

3 January 1948  
Franklin, Kentucky

I, [redacted] do hereby state that none of my buildings or  
appurtenances were damaged in any way by crash of aircraft piloted by  
Captain Thomas W. Mantalk Jr., Kentucky Air National Guard when it  
crashed in my field one hundred and fifty yards to the left of my  
house.

[redacted]

WITNESS I s/Douglas J. McGill  
1050 Howland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

II s/Richard L. Tyler  
132 Fortress Street, Louisville, Kentucky

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/Robert W. Perkins  
Captain, USAF

47

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.

5-6167-6




The foregoing times mentioned are approximately only.

The conversation was not recorded. I have stated it in the way I remember it, to the best of my ability.

/s/ Quinton A. Blackwell  
QUINTON A. BLACKWELL  
Technical Sergeant  
Serial No. 18162475

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

  
RICHARD L. TYLER  
Captain Ky ANG

8 January 1948

Item 7. Pertinent Weather

Bollins Green, Ky., 7 January 1948

- 1530C High scattered, 20 miles visibility, temperature 51°, dew point 22, wind from S-SW at 14mph, altimeter setting 30.14.  
1630C High broken, 15 miles visibility, temperature 44°, dew point 25, wind from S-SE at 8mph, altimeter setting 30.12.  
1730C High scattered, 10 miles visibility, temperature 40°, dew point 24, wind from S-SE at 7mph, altimeter setting 30.12.  
1830C Clear, 8 miles visibility, temperature 38°, dew point 23, wind from S-SE at 9mph, altimeter setting 30.10.

Nashville, Tenn., 7 January 1948

- 1530C High scattered, 15 miles visibility, temperature 53°, dew point 18, wind from S-SW at 9mph, altimeter setting 30.16.  
1630C High scattered, 15 miles visibility, temperature 52°, dew point 20, wind from S at 5mph, altimeter setting 30.14.  
1730C High thin broken, 12 miles visibility, temperature 48°, dew point 18, wind from S-SE at 4mph, altimeter setting 30.14.  
1830C High thin scattered, 12 miles visibility, temperature 46°, dew point 19, wind from S-SE at 7mph, altimeter setting 30.14.

123500  
29

8 January 1948

3. Narrative Summary of Additional Information: A Flight of 4 P-51's was enroute from Marietta, Georgia, GA to Standiford Field, Louisville, Ky, when approximately 30 minutes SW of Standiford Field, at 14500, Godman Tower called aircraft and requested that they investigate unidentified object visible in sky in vicinity of Godman Field, Ft. Knox, Ky. NG 3336 landed at Standiford Field, and NG 3369, 3737, and 3800 began climbing. Upon reaching 22,000' NG 3737, and 3800 descended, but NG 3869 continued climbing.

At 16450, aircraft NG 3869 crashed 4.5 miles SW of Franklin, Ky. Mr. Joe Walker, Traffic Policeman at Franklin, Ky, Phone 169, was contacted and he said crash was 1-1/2 miles W of Highway 314, and that eye witnesses (he did not get their names) reported that aircraft was not doing acrobatics, and was not at abnormally low altitude (height not estimated) but seemed to explode with loud noise and flash of fire before it hit the ground. Parts of the aircraft were distributed over a large area; one wing was approximately 100 yards from point where aircraft hit ground; other wing, prop, empennage, seemed to be missing. Aircraft did not burn after hitting ground. When Mr. Walker arrived, body of pilot had been removed from crash, by unknown parties, had parachute on.

Standiford Field National Guard Unit is handling investigation and WFLS suggested that an Air Force Officer aid in the investigation and requested Godman Field to do so.

3000

30

*W. A. Wilson*

*(2) Acc Analysis*

*After Acc met*

*File*

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120000

120000

*JK*

~~near the area~~

near the area in which the object was observed.

Capt Mantell

7 January 1948

An official board of inquiry, which made ~~an~~ intensive study of the crash reported that Mantell, an aggressive pilot, attempted to pursue the object as long as possible, even though he knew he lacked oxygen.

Of significance is the fact that although a number of witnesses observed the object, there were some discrepancies in their description of the object. The size of the object was ranged from "small" to "tremendous", and the shape as "a parachute, ball, ice-cream cone, round, disc, etc".

Although ~~no~~ no evaluation was given to the object being

~~the planet Venus~~ the planet Venus, because all the times and bearings given by observers generally agree with the bearings and elevation of ~~the~~ <sup>the body</sup> at the time, ~~it was~~

official files

disclose that it was. Later determined that a large Navy "sky hook" balloon was released from a meeting in Southern Ohio. This was a classified project, and the <sup>existence of</sup> the large balloons were known only to few. It was ~~not~~ for that ~~they~~ indicated that the balloon would have ~~been~~

During the period of this sighting the Navy was conducting a program utilizing "sky hook" balloons. The Navy program was classified at this time and therefore these balloon flights were known only to those with a "need-to-know". It was subsequently determined that on the date of the Godman sighting a balloon was released by the Navy from Clinton County airport in Ohio. The release time of the balloon was related to a wind plot for 7 January 1948, and it revealed that the balloon would have been in the area of Godman at the time of the sighting.

On 7 January 1948, at the time of the sighting, Venus was also in a directional position which coincided with that of the UFO. This planet's angular distance from the sun was rather small, but bright enough to be seen in the daytime. It is possible that Venus was also a cause to this sighting, and was observed by some of the witnesses on the ground. However, the prime culprit is believed to have been the sky hook balloon released by the Navy. Captain Mantell was attempting to close in on this balloon which was still more than 40,000 ft above him.

It is the Air Force conclusion in this case that Venus was probably the original cause of the sighting since the object remained in the area for a long period of time and was relatively stationary. The object pursued by Captain Mantell is believed to have been the sky hook balloon, and this object was probably seen by other witnesses who described the object as pear shaped and metallic.

THE MANTELL CASE  
7 January 1948

On 7 January 1948, at 1320 (1:20 pm) hours, the tower crew at Godman Field, Kentucky sighted a bright disc shaped object which they were unable to identify. The presence of this object was brought to the attention of the Base Operations Officer, Base Intelligence Officer, and eventually the Base Commander, but the object remained unidentified. At 1445 (2:45 pm), a flight of five P-51's flew over Godman Field. The object was still visible, and the Flight Commander was requested to investigate and attempt to determine the nature of the UFO if his mission allowed. The Flight Commander, Captain Mantell, stated he was on a ferry mission, but would investigate. Captain Mantell then started a spiraling climb to 15,000 feet, then continued to climb on a heading of 220°, the approximate direction of the UFO from Godman Field. At 15,000 feet the wing men turned back because they were not completely outfitted for flights requiring oxygen. The wing men attempted to contact Captain Mantell by radio but were unsuccessful. Captain Mantell made a transmission at 15,000 feet to the effect that he had the object in sight, and was still climbing to investigate. The 15,000 foot transmission was the last known of Captain Mantell.

It is the ATIC opinion that Captain Mantell lost consciousness due to oxygen starvation, the aircraft being trimmed continued to climb until increasing altitude caused a sufficient loss of power for it to level out. The aircraft then began a turn to the left due to torque and as the wing dropped so did the nose until the aircraft was in a tight diving spiral. The uncontrolled descent resulted in excessive speed causing the aircraft to disintegrate. It is believed that Captain Mantell never regained consciousness. This is borne out by the fact that the canopy lock was still in place after the crash, discounting any attempt to abandon the aircraft. The UFO was in no way directly responsible for this accident. However, it is probable that the excitement caused by the object was responsible for this experienced pilot conducting a high altitude flight without the necessary oxygen equipment.

There were two conceptions as to the identity of the object; Venus, one of the brightest objects in our heavens, or a large balloon used for high altitude experimental flights and known as "sky hooks". These balloons fly at altitudes in excess of 60,000 feet and reach diameters of approximately 100 feet.



THE MANTRELL CASE  
7 January 1948

*[Handwritten signature]*

On 7 January 1948, at 1330 (1:30 P.M.) hours, the tower crew at  
Cody Field, Kentucky sighted a high speed object which  
they were unable to identify. The presence of this object was  
brought to the attention of the Base Operations Officer, Base  
Intelligence Officer, and eventually the Base Commander, but the  
object remained unidentified. At 1445 (2:45 P.M.), a flight of  
five P-51's flew over Cody Field. The object was still visible,  
and the Flight Commander was requested to investigate and attempt  
to determine the nature of the UFO if his mission allowed. The  
Flight Commander, Captain Mantrell, stated he was on a busy mission,  
but would investigate. Captain Mantrell then started a spiraling  
climb to 15,000 feet, then continued climbing on a heading of 270,  
the approximate direction of the UFO over the field. At 15,000  
feet the wing men turned left to contact the object. The flight  
was equipped for flights requiring high altitude. Captain  
Mantrell made a transmission to the tower stating he had  
the object in sight, and that it was a high speed object.  
The 15,000 foot transmission was received by the tower  
until the next day, when the tower was still containing  
the message.

It is the AHC's opinion  
oxygen starvation  
until increasing  
level out. The  
and as the  
tight diving  
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of object

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investigation  
and the  
most of the

During the period of this sighting the Navy was conducting a program utilizing "sky hook" balloons. The Navy program was classified at this time and therefore these balloon flights were known only to those with a "need-to-know". It was subsequently determined that on the date of the Godman sighting a balloon was released by the Navy from Clinton County airport in Ohio. The release time of the balloon was related to a wind plot for 7 January 1948, and it revealed that the balloon would have been in the area of Godman at the time of the sighting.

On 7 January 1948, at the time of the sighting, Venus was also in a directional position which coincided with that of the UFO. This planet's angular distance from the sun was rather small, but bright enough to be seen in the daytime. It is possible that Venus was also a cause to this sighting, and was observed by some of the witnesses on the ground. However, the prime culprit is believed to have been the sky hook balloon released by the Navy. Captain Mantell was attempting to close on this balloon which was still more than 4000 feet above the ground.

It is the Air Force conclusion that the cause of the sighting was probably the original cause of the sighting since the object remained in the area for a long period of time and the relative stationary nature of the object pursued by Captain Mantell is believed to have been a balloon, and this object was probably a sky hook balloon. The object was described as pear shaped and moving.

As cut from  
LOOK Magazine.

# JFO form continued

Page 8

Indeed, at the time I was married to ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~, we sat outside to let the house cool off during those days. He usually slept, while I enjoyed the beautiful clear dark sky with glittering stars, all sizes. I felt, that what I saw, was my very personal secret and could not share with anyone, instinctively afraid, to destroy by words or ideas, what I saw. On the other side, it didn't seem important enough to talk about it, it was so far away, so very small.

But now I feel, I have to report what I saw, even so its quite long ago. The year I cannot even tell correctly, but it was after 1946.

Sincerely yours,



Found later that "Sky Hook" balloons were launched from Clinton County in Southern Ohio on or about 7 January 1948. These large balloons were unknown, but to very few people at that time. Wind plots also indicated that the Sky Hook would have been brought over or near Godman area.

Dr HYNEK'S EVALUATIONS EXTRACTED FROM PROJECT GRUDGE REPORT.

INCIDENT INDEX

1. Astronomical

a. High probability:

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95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 104, 116, 119, 132, 136, 140,  
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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:

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126, 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, 62, 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.

[REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #33, a-g -- Godman Field, Fort Knox, Kentucky -- 7 January 1948  
& discussion of all incidents reported for this date

Incidents #30, 32, 33, and 48 all occurred on 7 January 1948, with #33 involving the death of Lieutenant Mantell. Detailed attention has therefore been given to any possible astronomical body or phenomenon which might serve to identify the object or objects concerned. The four incidents are considered together here.

Although the several reports differ considerably in regard to the bearing and motion of the object (assuming for the moment that the afternoon and evening sightings refer to the same phenomenon), they are generally consistent concerning the time, manner, and place of its disappearance over the horizon. Hour and azimuth are given as 1906 CST, about  $250^{\circ}$ , by observers at Godman Field; 1955 EST, west southwest, by those at Lockbourne Air Base; and 1955-2000 EST, about  $210^{\circ}$ , by those at Clinton County Air Base; (there are, as is to be expected, slight differences in individual reports). Using this for the focal point of attack, one notes immediately that all these times and bearings agree closely with the time and place of the setting of Venus. Furthermore, all accounts except one agree that the object was low in the southwest before the time of disappearance. Reports vary as to details of its motion, but the overall motion was southwest and then over the horizon. These facts taken together preclude any question of coincidence. Furthermore, simultaneous observation from scattered locations proves that the object had negligible parallax, or, in short, that it was a very great distance away. All other statements concerning the object must,

incident #33, a-g -- page 2

it seems to this investigator, be weighed in terms of the overwhelming evidence of the manner of disappearance over the horizon.

The stellar magnitude of Venus on January 7 was  $-3.4$ , which makes it 29 times brighter than the bright star Arcturus. Venus, when as bright as this and shining through interstices in a host of clouds, could very easily give the effect of a flashing object with a tail. Concerning the erratic motion reported by some witnesses, this can be said: motion of clouds past the object could give the illusion of rapid movement, as when clouds scud by the moon; or the effect could have been a psychological illusion; a third possibility, remote but based on a rarely-observed phenomenon, is that, owing to thermo-inversions in the atmosphere, stars near the horizon have been known to jump about erratically through arcs of two or three times the moon's apparent diameter. Venus, when very close to the horizon, has been known to twinkle brilliantly with rapidly changing colors.

It appears to the present investigator, in summing up the evidence presented, that we are forced to the conclusion that the object observed in the early evening hours of January 7, 1943, at these widely separated localities, was the planet Venus. To assume that a terrestrial object could be located so high as to be visible simultaneously over a wide area, could be of such intrinsic brightness (of incredible brightness, far surpassing any known man-made light), and would be placed essentially at the very position of Venus in the sky over an

Incident #33, -a-g -- page 3

interval of more than half an hour, would be incredible.

Incident #33 is the only one of the four that includes the daytime observation of presumably this same object. The importance of the incident is, however, paramount, for it was in tracking down the mysterious object that Lieutenant Mantell lost his life. Again it is possible that the object observed was the planet Venus, although the evidence is by no means as definitive as that for the sightings made later that day. First, the bearings of the object as reported by various witnesses differ considerably; where one says southwest, another says south, for the same instant. However, integrating all the evidence, one is again struck with the coincidence of the object's position with that of Venus. The following short table of sightings vs the position of Venus shows the general agreement of the two in azimuth:

CST	Object	Venus
1330 (PFC Oliver)	SW of field	Almost due S: 174°
1345 (Sgt. Blackwell)	South of field	178°
(PFC Oliver)	SW	
after 1400 (Lt. Ormer)	SW	from due S (180°) at 1400, moving westward
1445 (Capt. Mantell)	210°	195°
(Col. Hix)	215°	

A more pertinent question is that of whether it would have been possible to see Venus in the daytime on that day. All that can be said here is that it was not impossible to see the planet under those conditions. It is well known that when Venus is at its greatest brilliancy, it is possible to see it during the daytime when one knows exactly where to look, but on January 7, 1948, Venus was less than half



Incident #33, a-g -- page 4

as bright as it is when most brilliant. However, under exceptionally good atmospheric conditions and with the eye shielded from the direct rays of the sun, Venus might be seen as an exceedingly tiny bright point of light. It can be shown that it was definitely brighter than the surrounding sky, for on the date in question Venus had a semi-diameter of 6 seconds of arc, or a total apparent surface area of approximately 125 square seconds. Assuming that a square second of sky would be a trifle brighter than the fourth magnitude, a portion of the sky of the same area presented by Venus would be about -1.4 magnitude. Since the planet, however, was -3.4, it was 6 times brighter than an equivalent area of sky. While it is thus physically possible to see Venus at such times, usually its pinpoint character and the large expanse of sky makes its casual detection very unlikely. If, however, a person happens to look toward a point on the sky that is just a few minutes of arc from the position of Venus, he is apt to be startled by this apparition and to wonder why he didn't see it before. The chances, of course, of looking at just the right spot are very few. Once done, however, it is usually fairly easy to relocate the object and to call the attention of others to it. However, atmospheric conditions must be exceptionally good. It is improbable, for example, that Venus would be seen under these circumstances in a large city.

It can be said, therefore, that a possible explanation for the object sighted in the daytime in incident #33, a-g, is that it

Incident „33, a-g -- page 5

too was the planet Venus. In the absence of exact measures, however, it is impossible to establish that it was or was not. (It is unfortunate that theodolite measures of the afternoon observations were evidently not made.)

It has been unofficially reported that the object was a Navy cosmic ray balloon. If this can be established, it is to be preferred as an explanation. However, if one accepts the assumption that reports from various other locations in the state refer to the same object, any such device must have been a good many miles high -- 25 to 50 -- in order to have been seen clearly, almost simultaneously, from places 175 miles apart.

It is entirely possible, of course, that the first sightings were of some sort of balloon or aircraft, but that when these reports came to Godman Field, a careful scrutiny of the sky revealed Venus, and it could be that Lieutenant Mantell did actually give chase to the planet, even though whatever object had been the source of the excitement elsewhere had disappeared. At the altitudes that the pilot reached, Venus would have been very much more easily observed than from the ground, and it might even be that he did not actually pick it up until he was at a considerable altitude. The one piece of evidence that leads this investigator to believe that at the time of Lieutenant Mantell's death he was actually trying to reach Venus is

Incident #33 -- page 6

that the object appeared essentially stationary (or moving steadily away from him) and that he could not seem to gain on it.

In summing up, this can be said: the evening sightings reported in incidents #30, 32, 33, and 48 were undoubtedly of the planet Venus. Regarding the daylight sightings from Godman Field and other places in Kentucky, there seems so far to be no single explanation that does not rely greatly on coincidences. If all reports were of a single object, in the knowledge of this investigator no man-made object could have been large enough and far enough away for the approximately simultaneous sightings. It is most unlikely, however, that so many separate persons should at that time have glanced on Venus in the daylight sky. It seems, therefore, much more probable that more than one object was involved: the sightings might have included two or more balloons (or aircraft); or they might have included both Venus (in the fatal chase) and balloons. For reasons given above, the latter explanation seems more likely. Such a hypothesis does, however, still necessitate the inclusion of at least two objects other than Venus, and it certainly is coincidental that so many people would have chosen this one day to be confused (to the extent of reporting the matter) by normal airborne objects. There remains one possible, very plausible explanation for this fact, however: was the original report by any chance broadcast by local radio stations? If so, with the general public on the alert, even

[REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #33 -- page 7

the commonest aircraft might suddenly have appeared to be strange celestial objects.

In any event, since it seems possible that at the time of Lieutenant Mantell's death, he was actually giving chase to Venus (and since, certainly, during the evening sightings, persons assumedly well acquainted with objects of the sky were alarmed by the appearance of the planet), it might be wise to give information about this incident wide circulation among air force personnel, so that tragic mistakes will not occur in the future.

# DISPOSITION FORM

FILE NO.

SUBJECT

(Uncl) Transmittal of Report

AFOIN-2A2

FROM ATIG

DATE

COMMENT NO. 1

Attn: Maj Fournet

*ed-ew*  
Capt Ruppelt/vs  
66361/B 263D/P D-28

1. Attached is the file on an incident that occurred on 7 January 1948 at Godman Air Force Base, Kentucky, in which Lt Mantell was killed.

2. This file was requested by the Air Force PIO.

3. Please check appropriate channels prior to release.

~~It is requested that appropriate action be taken to release this information.~~

*for W<sup>Mr</sup> Rie, Col USAF*  
DONALD L. BOWER, Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Technical Analysis Division  
Air Technical Intelligence Center

3 Incls:

- 1. Ltr fr Godman AFB dtd 2/3/49
- 2. CC R&R fr TSXMF dtd 1/15/48
- 3. File dtd 1/7/48 - Godman Fld., Ky.

If inclosure *1 thru 3* is withdrawn (or not attached), the classification of this correspondence will be downgraded to *Uncl* in accordance with paragraph 202, AFR 205-1.

*Hand lettered "Sky Bob" balloons were launched from Century Center in Southern Ohio after 7 January 1948 unknown. But the next few days at that time. One of the balloons was shot down by Bob, who had been sent over a War Zone area.*

*File ab*

SECURITY INFORMATION *R7C*

# Official U.S. Air Force U

Page 7

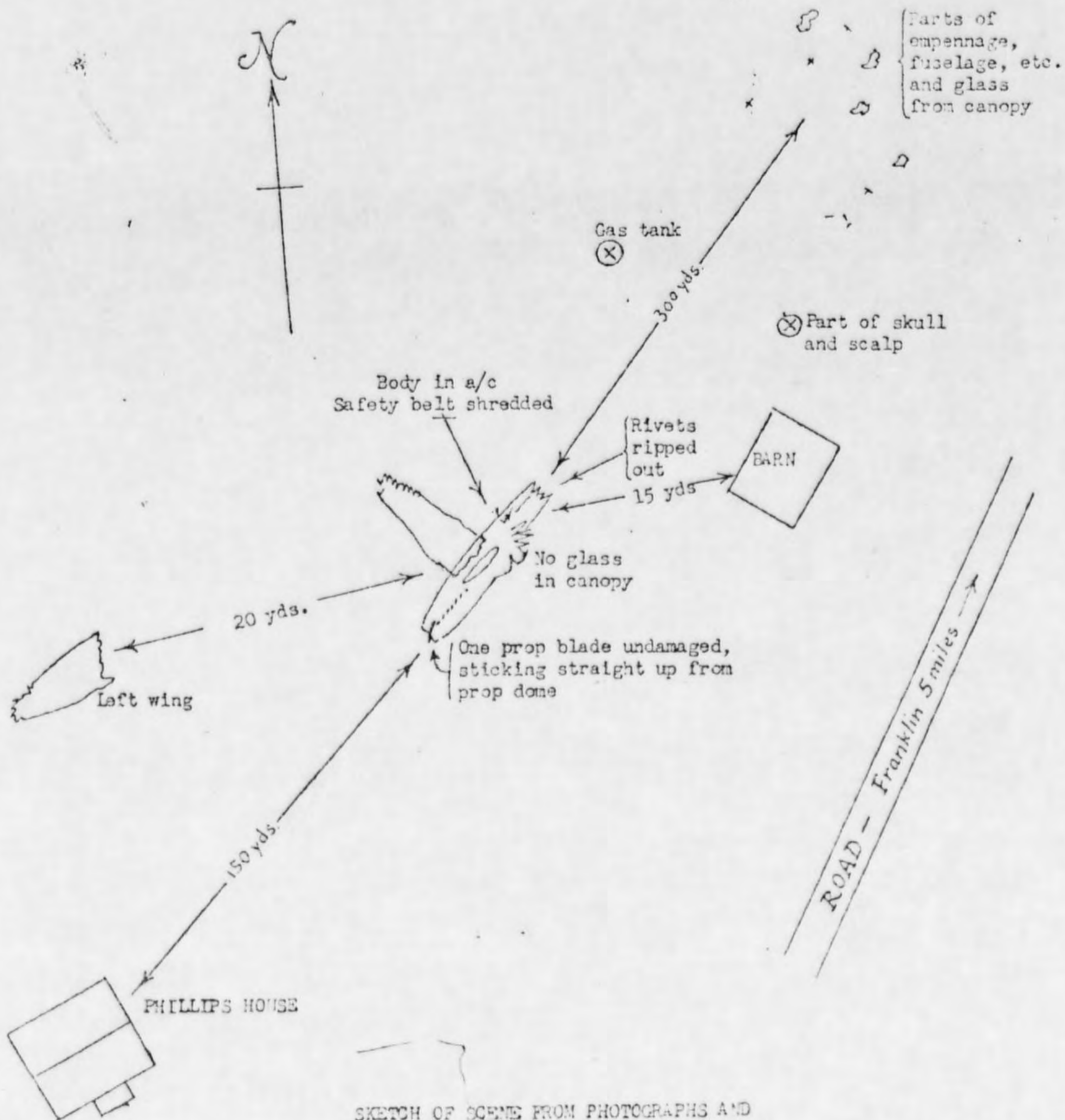
34. Date you completed this questionnaire:

10      2      1967  
Day      Month      Year

35. Information which you feel pertinent and which is not adequately covered in the specific points of the questionnaire or a narrative explanation of your sighting.

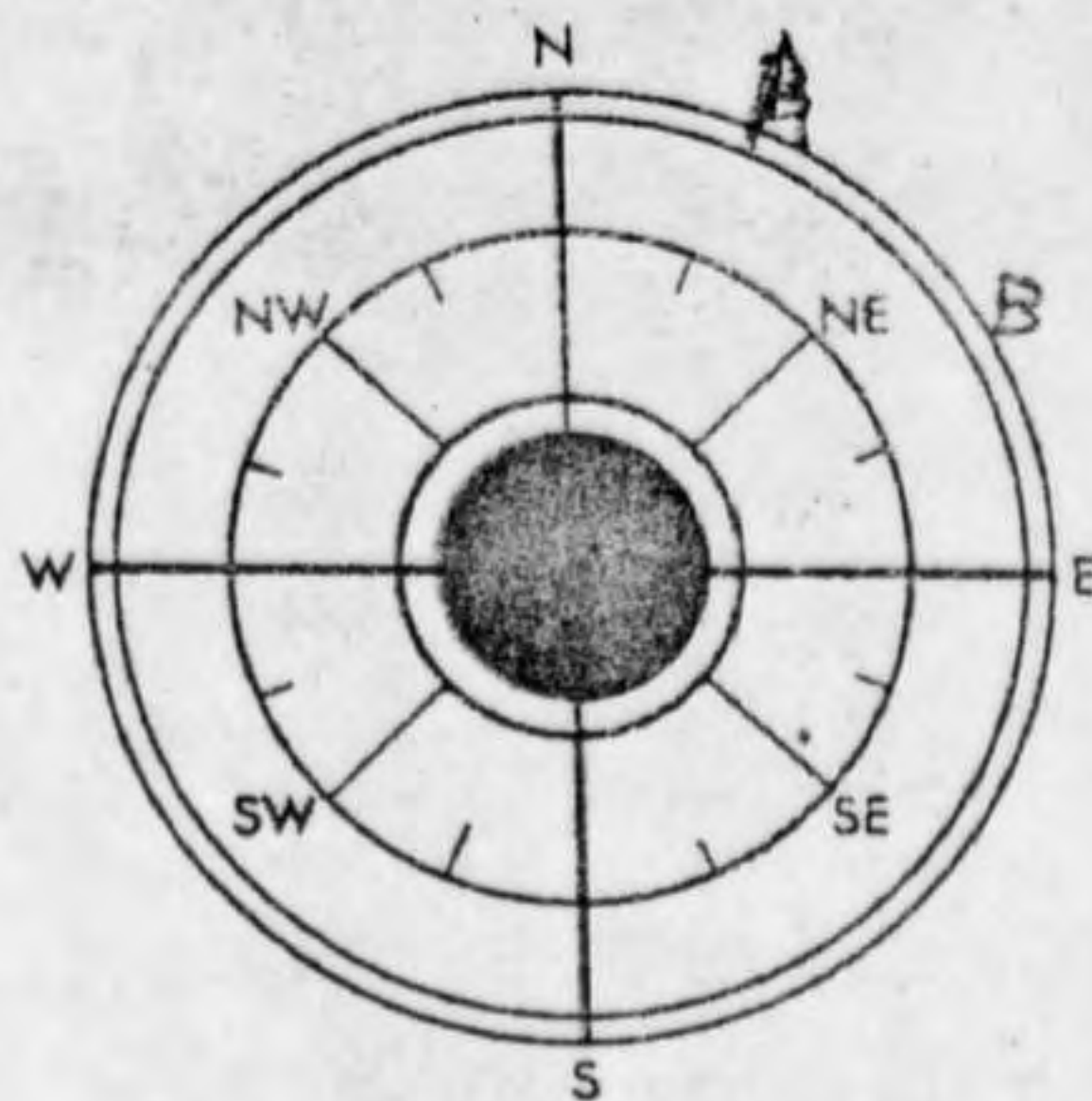
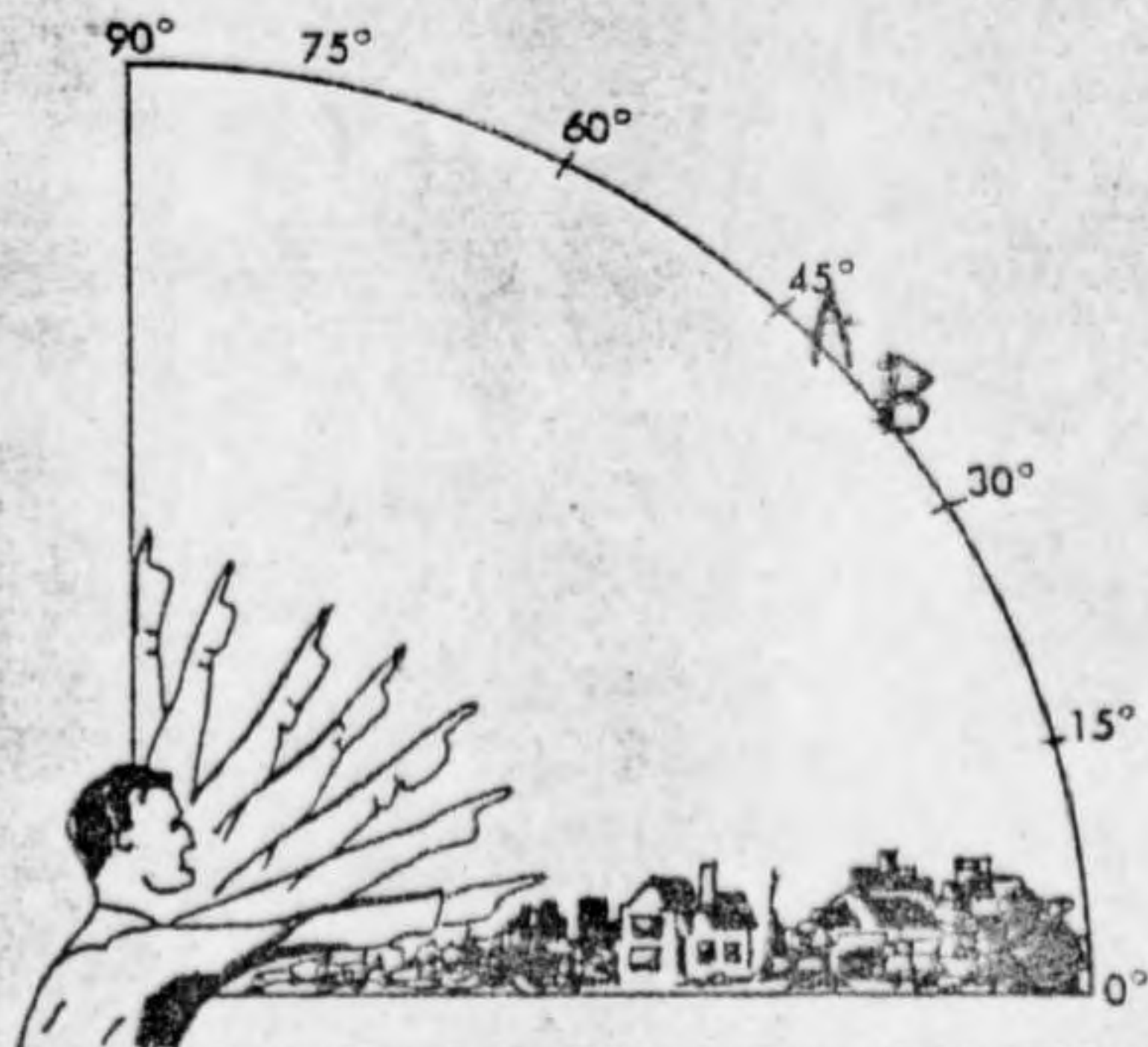
Around 1950 I read about the u.F.O's then flying saucers. Living in Israel from 1946-1956, I had no time nor thought of the incident to report.

The reason I didn't even talk about those shiny spots in the sky was, you wouldn't take it as a reason: What I saw was beyond my power of thinking. I knew all the flying things what it could have been, but couldn't think of any human made object, so I shut myself off and thought; it's not from earth and therefore not my right to question this. If those things are stars, then God made them what for a change.

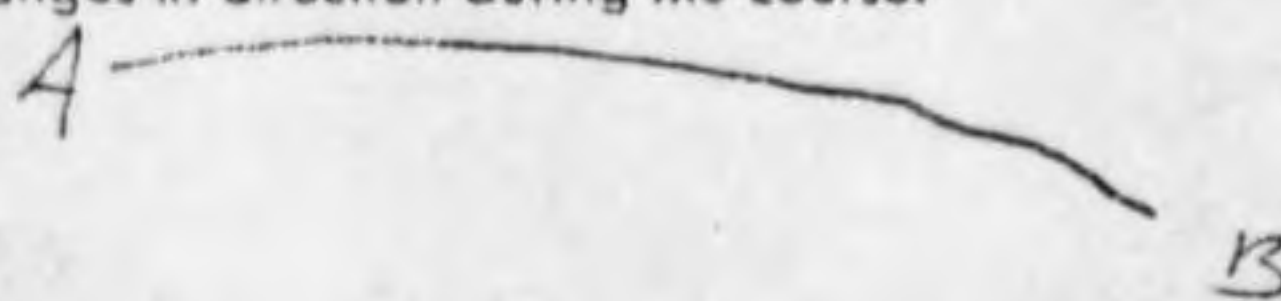


SKETCH OF SCENE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESCRIPTION OF OFFICER AT SCENE

27. In the following sketch, imagine that you are at the point shown. Place an "A" on the curved line to show how high the object was above the horizon (skyline) when you first saw it. Place a "B" on the same curved line to show how high the object was above the horizon (skyline) when you last saw it. Place an "A" on the compass when you first saw it. Place a "B" on the compass when you last saw the object.



28. Draw a picture that will show the motion that the object or objects made. Place an "A" at the beginning of the path, a "B" at the end of the path, and show any changes in direction during the course.



29. IF there was MORE THAN ONE object, then how many were there? 4 OR 6 OR 7  
 Draw a picture of how they were arranged, and put an arrow to show the direction that they were traveling.

