

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

Incident #117

ATTC NO. --- DATE OF INFO 7 May 48

AF NO. --- LOCATION Memphis, Tenn.

REPORT NO. --- SOURCE Female Civilians

DATE OF REPORT --- DATE IN TO ATTC ---

TIME OF SIGHTING 1500 to 1700 COLOR Shiny - like bright aluminum

SHAPE Unknown - possibly like meteor SPEED Faster than any aircraft Estimated

SIZE Very small ALTITUDE Extremely high Estimated

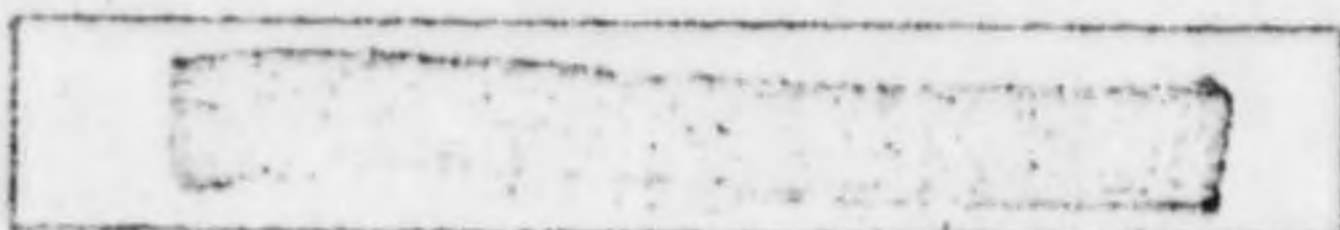
COURSE Easterly LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED ---

NO. IN GROUP 50 or 60 TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground

SOUND --- MANEUVERS Most travelled straight line although some zig-zagged.

PHOTOS --- SKETCHES ---

Temporary ATTC Form 329  
(2 Jan 52)



*117*



UNCLASSIFIED

Subject: Memphis Incident

AMC

1st Ind

MCIAAC-3/RWS/LW

Hq AMC, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio

FEB 11 1949

TO: Research & Development Board, Technical Intelligence Branch, Rm 3E  
636, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D. C. ATTN: Mr David E. Beckler

The inclosed letter and teletype copies comprise all information available at this Command concerning the incident of 7 May 1948 at Memphis, Tennessee.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

- 6 Incls
- 1 thru 4: n/c
- Added 2 incls
- 5. Ltr to CG 3rd Army  
8 May 48
- 6. Wire to CG Wright-Patterson AFB

H. M. MCCOY  
Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Intelligence Department

Incloasures 2 & 4 not available for file

1949 FEB 11 11 15 AM

UNCLASSIFIED

350.09  
Operations Section File Cy - return showing date



1 CLASSIFIED [REDACTED]  
NATIONAL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

2 February 1949

MEMORANDUM TO: Air Materiel Command  
Intelligence Division  
Wright Patterson Air Base  
Dayton, Ohio  
Attn: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Memphis Incident

1. It is requested that all pertinent details of the so-called "Memphis incident" of May 7, 1948, 2:00 to 5:00 P. M., be furnished the Research and Development Board for use by the RDB Committee on Geophysical and Geographical Sciences.
2. Attached hereto is correspondence from Dr. Lincoln LaPaz referring to the Memphis incident.
3. This information should be transmitted to the Research and Development Board, Technical Intelligence Branch, Room 3E 636, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D. C., Attn: Mr David Z. Beckler.

DAVID Z. BECKLER  
Chief  
Technical Intelligence Branch

Attachments:

Extracts from letter to Dr [REDACTED]  
from Dr Lincoln LaPaz 1/12/49  
Letter to Lt Col Rees from Dr LaPaz  
1/6/49  
Letter to Dr LaPaz from [REDACTED]  
1/4/49  
Letter to Lt Col Rees, from Dr LaPaz  
12/30/48

UNCLASSIFIED  
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Supplement to Trip Report to Memphis - 17 thru 19 May 1948

THRU: Col Clingeram WRC

TO: Col McCoy

1. The facts of the sighting on 7 May 1948 in Memphis, Tennessee, as reported by teletype from Fort McPherson, Ga., were substantially corroborated in interviews with the witnesses, Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] and daughter and Miss [REDACTED]. The display was described essentially as small shiny starlike objects moving at high altitude in a straight line from West to East with the apparent velocity of shooting stars. Occasionally one would deviate from its course making sharp angular turns. They seemed to disappear in the distance rather than to burn out and disappear suddenly. The witnesses believed they had observed a meteor shower.

2. The Adjutant of the Reserve Training Base at Memphis Municipal Airport, 468 AFBU, was contacted. He promised to check with the large Millington Naval Base near Memphis to ascertain whether or not any naval aerial maneuvers had taken place on 7 May. This information will be reported to this Headquarters. He further stated that no unusual Air Force operations had taken place at that time.

3. This office contemplates contacting personnel of the Astronomy Department at the University of Dayton and also of the Observatory in Cincinnati to endeavor to determine whether or not a meteor shower would be visible to the naked eye during daylight hours and whether such a shower was reported on 7 May.

*James C. Beam*  
JAMES C. BEAM  
Lt Col, USAF  
Project Officer  
Technical Intel Div

485.3

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

nci-34



UNCLASSIFIED

Supplement II to Trip Report to Memphis, Tenn. - Visit with  
Dr. Paul Hergert of the Observatory of Cincinnati, Ohio.

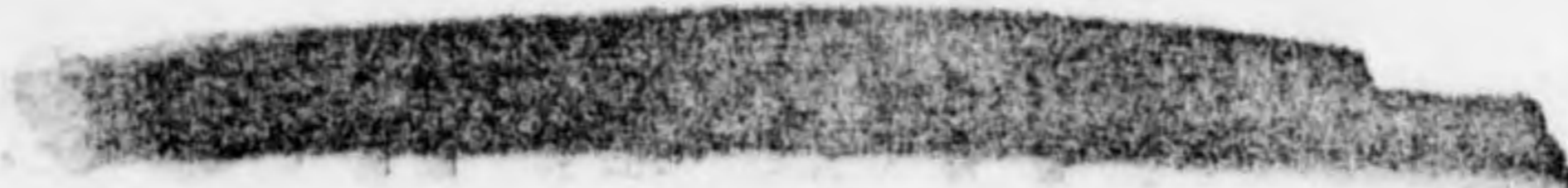
Attn: Mr. ██████████:

1. This visit was made in an effort to ascertain the possibility and the probability of individuals to sight meteors during daylight hours with the unaided eye. Dr. Hergert stated that such sighting was a very rare occurrence and when it did take place it almost invariably occurred in the afternoon with the observer looking toward the west. This time and position assured the most suitable conditions for observation because of the resultant light conditions and the relatively slow speed occasioned by both earth and meteor traveling in the same direction. The meteor would appear as a dark spot in the sky for a period of two to four seconds. Dr. Hergert expressed serious doubt that the 50 or more objects observed 7 May 1948 in Memphis were meteors. He was unable, however, to offer any explanation as to a possible identification of the objects.

2. Dr. Hergert suggested that Dr. Hynek at Ohio State University and Dr. Lincoln LaPaz of the University of New Mexico be contacted. The former is supposedly working on a project for the Air Force in an attempt to discover the possibility of photographing stars during daylight hours. The latter, according to Dr. Hergert, is a recognized authority on meteors.

JAMES C. BEAM  
Lt Col, USAF  
Project Officer

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



UNCLASSIFIED



~~SECRET~~  
UNCLASSIFIED

Subject: Memphis Incident

AMC

1st Ind

WCLANC-3/H&S/aw

Hq AMC, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio

TO: Research & Development Board, Technical Intelligence Branch, Rm 3E  
636, The Pentagon, Washington 25, D. C. ATTN: Mr David E. Beckler

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H. M. MCCOY  
Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Intelligence Department

UNCLASSIFIED  
~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~  
UNCLASSIFIED  
NATIONAL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

2 February 1949

MEMORANDUM TO: Air Materiel Command  
Intelligence Division  
Wright Patterson Air Base  
Dayton, Ohio  
Attn: W. R. Clingerman

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DAVID Z. BECKLER  
Chief  
Technical Intelligence Branch

Attachments:

Extracts from letter to Dr Landsberg  
from Dr Lincoln LaPaz 1/12/49  
Letter to Lt Col Rees from Dr LaPaz  
1/6/49  
Letter to Dr LaPaz from Richard Kruse  
1/4/49  
Letter to Lt Col Rees, from Dr LaPaz  
12/30/48

UNCLASSIFIED  
~~SECRET~~



~~██████████~~  
Hicksville, N. Y.  
Jan 4, 1949

Dr Lincoln LaPaz  
Univ. New Mexico  
Albuquerque, N. Mex.

Dear Sir,

During an Air Transport Command flight from Santa Maria, Azores, to Paris, in Jan., 1946, I witnessed the fall of a meteorite, an account of which I have often thought might be of interest to astronomers, and in particular, those of you more particularly concerned with the study of meteoritics. Until I read a recent issue of Science Illustrated I had not known to whom I might direct such a report.

Sitting in the cockpit of an airplane for hours at night a pilot sees many meteors fall; but on this night I saw one fall which I have not forgotten because of the unusual nature of the fall.

Our position was approximately midway between Brest and Paris; more exactly, I would estimate between 65 and 70 nautical miles due south of Cherbourg. As I recall now, the time was about 23:00 G. M. T. on Jan. 18, 1946. I was alone in the cockpit of a C-54 type plane at 7,000 ft. altitude, above broken clouds whose tops ranged between 4,000 and 5,000 ft. The sky was crystal clear. We were flying in the direction of Paris.

The meteor first appeared to me at an altitude of about 35° above the horizon. It fell (apparently) from the north at an angle of perhaps 20° or 25° from the vertical. It did not explode. Its intense brilliance persisted until it met the horizon at a point bearing 85° to 90° true from our position. This would put its point of contact with the earth somewhere on a line between Brest and Kiev (roughly). A split second after disappearing at the horizon, the meteorite reappeared above the horizon, describing a tiny hyperbola of perhaps 1° altitude and fell again from sight. The reappearance of the meteorite was like a ricochet or rebound. The elapsed time of the fall and reappearance was perhaps 2 or 3 seconds.

My log book also shows night flights over this route on Feb 12, 1946, March 22, 1946; and May 19, 1946; but I feel about 95% certain that the incident occurred on the night of January 18th., 1946. Otherwise the account is accurate to the best of my knowledge and memory.

I should be interested to hear if you have knowledge of a meteorite having fallen at the time and in a location which may fit the account I have given. Also, please let me know if I may be of further service to the Institute of Meteoritics.

Yours truly,

~~██████████~~  
(See attached comments by Dr Lincoln LaPaz, Director, Institute of Meteoritics, Univ. of N. M.)



EXTRACTS  
FROM  
Letter Directed to Dr H. E. Landsberg  
from

Dr Lincoln LaPaz, Director  
Institute of Meteoritics  
University of New Mexico  
January 12, 1949

In my opinion, [redacted] observation (which, as the first paragraph of his letter indicates, reached me only through his chance reading of my article in Science Illustrated) is of the utmost significance. What he observed was certainly not a "bouncing meteorite." A much more reasonable interpretation of his observation is that he saw a luminous object following a wave-like path (somewhat analogous to the real path of the Los Alamos fireball of 1948, December 20, 8<sup>h</sup> 54<sup>m</sup> PM), the point from which [redacted] observed being situated very nearly in the plane of the trajectory of the luminous object and the direction of motion of this object being almost directly away from [redacted], so that the observed angular altitude of the first crest on the wave-like path was quite large (at least 13°) while the observed angular altitude for the second, more distant, crest was only about 1°.

In view of the fact that [redacted] important observation came to attention only by accident, it seems to me that immediate steps should be taken to interrogate all former and present ATC pilots (especially all pilots now flying in Germany or elsewhere in Europe) in order to determine whether additional observations similar to that made by [redacted] have been made. Would it not be possible to require all pilots and co-pilots to report in detail on any fire-balls they may observe which they have any reason to believe are definitely or possibly non-meteoritic?



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[REDACTED]  
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Yours truly,

(See attached comments by Dr Lincoln LaPaz, Director, Institute of Meteoritics, Univ. of N. M.)  
/s/ [REDACTED]



~~UNCLASSIFIED~~  
UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #117 -- Memphis, Tennessee -- 7 May 1948

It is unlikely that the objects viewed in this incident were meteors, but the possibility is not excluded.

It is unfortunate that some estimate of distance and of time in sight was not made. Objects might have been quite close, in which case large angular velocity would not imply great speed.

This investigator would like to emphasize again the need for better reporting of such incidents.

UNCLASSIFIED

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

[REDACTED]

4-3710-1



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, 60, 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, 67, 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.



## CHECK-LIST - UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Incident # ~~117~~ 117

1. Date 7 May 48
2. Time 1500 to 1700
3. Location Memphis, Tenn.
4. Name of observer Miss ~~██████████~~ Housekeeper et al (see other side)
5. Occupation of observer Housekeeper
6. Address of observer ~~██~~, Memphis, Tenn.
7. Place of observation Memphis, Tenn.
8. Number of objects 50 or 60
9. Distance of object from observer N/S
10. Time in sight N/S
11. Altitude extremely high
12. Speed faster than any aircraft witnesses had ever seen
13. Direction of flight easterly
14. Tactics Most traveled in straight line alt o some of them zig-zagged.
15. Sound None
16. Size Very small
17. Color shiny - like bright aluminum
18. Shape unknown - possibly like meteor
19. Odor detected N/S
20. Apparent construction N/S
21. Exhaust trails Some objects seemed to have a silvery tail which might have been exhaust
22. Weather conditions CAVU, wind: 330 to 340°, 15 MPH at surface increasing to 66 MPH at 20,000; Surface temp: 72°; dew point 43° relative humidity 40%
23. Effect on clouds N/S
24. Sketches or photographs None
25. Manner of disappearance N/S
26. Remarks: (over)







~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ RAC

12

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MCIA/JCB/amb  
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base  
XXXXXXXX

MCIA

Project "SIGN"

APR 22 1946

Director of Intelligence  
General Staff  
United States Army  
Washington 25, D. C.  
ATTENTION: CSGID

The attached copy of teletype from Fort McPherson, Georgia, is  
forwarded for your information.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

1 Incl  
by teletype fr  
Ft McPherson

*not in files*

*J. J. Hanson*  
H. A. McCOY  
Colonel, USAF  
Chief of Intelligence

321

F. D. [unclear]

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

UNCLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



EA28: CO UEDG URGENT URGENT

FM UEAC33A/CG FTMCPHERSON GA 281845Z  
TO COMGEN WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB DAYTON OHIO

WD GRNC

~~TOP SECRET~~ UNCLASSIFIED

PASS TO DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE GSUSA UNCONVENTIONAL AIRCRAFT  
APPROXIMATELY FIFTY OR SIXTY IN NUMBER SIGHTED AT MEMPHIS TENN SEVEN  
MAY NINETEEN FORTY EIGHT BETWEEN FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTENN HUNDRED  
HOURS PD WEATHER CLEAR VISIBILITY UNLIMITED AND UNRESTRICTED WIND  
DIRECTION THREE HUNDRED THIRTY TO THREE HUNDRED FORTY DEGREES WIND  
SPEED FIFTEEN M P H AT SURFACE INCREASED TO SIXTY SIX M P H AT TWENTY  
THOUSAND FT SURGACE TEMPERATURE SEVENTY TWO DEGREES DEW POINT FORTY  
THREE RELATIVE HUMIDITY FORTY PERCENT WITNESSES MISS ~~REDACTED~~  
~~REDACTED~~ MEMPHIS TENN MR ~~REDACTED~~ SALESMAN ~~REDACTED~~  
~~REDACTED~~ MEMPHIS MRS ~~REDACTED~~ MEMPHIS

NO PHOTOS APPEARANCE POSSIBLY LIKE A METEOR SIZE PROBABLY SMALL  
COLOR SHINY SPEED FASTER THAN ANY AIR CRAFT WITNESSES HAVE EVER SEEN  
DIRECTION OF TRAVEL EAST MANEUVERABILITY STRAIGHT LINE SOME SLIGHTLY  
ZIG-ZAG ALTITUDE EXTREMELY HIGH ESTIMATION JUDGED BY AIR CRAFT IN  
TR AT THAT TIME SOUND NONE EXHAUST TRAIL SEVERAL APPEARED TO HAVE  
A SILVERY TAIL PD ONE WEATHER BALLOON RELEASED IN MEMPHIS ON THE AFTER  
NOON OF SEVEN MAY AND THE LOCAL PAPER CARRIED A SMALL RELEASE ON  
THE SUBJECT NO FURTHER DETAILS R ~~REDACTED~~

281339Z

UNCLASSIFIED

*Handwritten notes:*  
JUL 20 1948  
2117



*W R T C*

*14 508*

1st Ind.  
PAGE 2  
(8 May 1948)  
HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMY, Fort McPherson, Georgia, 11 May 1948

TO: Comdant, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio  
ATTN: MCI

Forwarded with reference to our TLE, same subject, dated 8 May 1948.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

*Cornelius A. Licherick*  
CORNELIUS A. LICHERICK  
LT. COL., CSC  
Actg AC of S, G-2

THREE

*14 508*



[REDACTED]

CIC FIELD AREA OFFICE NO 1  
POST OFFICE BOX 21  
MEMPHIS 1, TENNESSEE

AJACI-452.1 General

8 May 1948

SUBJECT: Unconventional Aircraft.

TO: Commanding General, Third Army, Fort McPherson, Georgia  
(ATTN: AC of S, G-2)

1. Information relative to the sighting of mysterious objects, possibly aircraft, at Memphis, Tenn., follows:

a. Location and time of sighting: Memphis, Tenn., 1500 to 1700, 7 May 1948.

b. Weather at the time: Visibility unlimited and unrestricted; winds: 330 to 340 degrees, 15 mph at surface increasing to 66 mph at 20,000 feet; Surface temperature, 72 degrees; dew point, 43 degrees; relative humidity, 40 percent.

c. Names, occupations and addresses of witnesses:

- (1) Miss [REDACTED], housekeeper, [REDACTED], Memphis.
- (2) Mr [REDACTED], salesman, [REDACTED], Memphis.
- (3) Mrs [REDACTED], housewife, [REDACTED], Memphis.

d. Photographs: None.

e. Objects sighted:

- (1) Number: 50 or 60.
- (2) Shape: Unknown, possibly like a meteor.
- (3) Size: Hard to determine, probably very small.
- (4) Color: Shiny, like bright aluminum.
- (5) Speed: Faster than any aircraft witnesses have ever seen
- (6) Heading: Easterly.

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

(7) Maneuverability: Most objects travelled in straight line; some of them zig-zagged slightly.

(8) Altitude: Extremely high: Witnesses judged altitude by comparing with known types of conventional aircraft in the air at the time.

(9) Sound: None.

(10) Exhaust trail: Some objects seemed to have a silvery tail, which might have been exhaust.

f. These objects could not have been weather balloons because the Memphis weather bureau released only one balloon in the afternoon.

g. The undersigned is of the opinion that the objects seen were meteorites.

h. Evaluation of sub-paragraph e above; B-3

/s/ Victor L. Clark

VICTOR L. CLARK  
Special Agent in Charge

Dist:  
CO, Tenn. Mil. Dist.,  
Nashville - 1  
File - 1

[REDACTED]