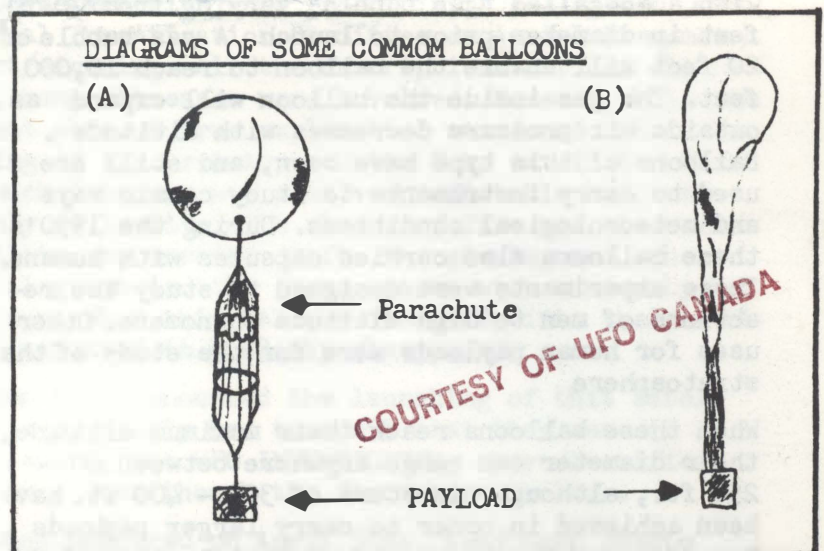


**MARCH** 1979**VOL-3 NO-3**

## EXPERIMENTAL BALLOONS & THEIR EFFECTS ON UFO REPORTS

Various types of balloons have been and continue to be one of the causes for UFO reports. Unfamiliarity with these objects is the major cause for their misidentification. During the late 1940's, the U.S. Navy was conducting classified experiments with a type of balloon known as the "SKY-HOOK". These experiments were unknown to other branches of the U.S. Armed services. As a result, the air force was unable to explain some of the UFO reports caused by these balloons. It was not until 1950, well after the unfortunate "Mantell" incident, that the facts became known on the Skyhook experiments.



Today, balloons still seem to cause a significant number of UFO reports. To understand why, it is necessary to illustrate the types of balloons which are in use, their construction, performance and various shapes. Historically speaking, the balloon is not a recent development. This mode of aerial transport dates back to the early 13th century. However, its scientific use as in the study of cosmic rays is a more recent development.

### NEOPRENE

One type of balloon is the NEOPRENE or rubber balloon which is commonly used to carry Radiosondes. A radiosone is basically an instrument box which registers and transmits meteorological data to a ground station. These balloons are approximately six feet in diameter at launch time but will expand to a diameter of some 60 feet when they reach their "float" altitude. These balloons have a climb - rate of 1,000 feet per minute and are capable of reaching altitude in excess of 80,000 feet. The Neoprene balloon has a much higher reflectance than either the polyethylene or "ghost" type. On the ground, the Neoprene type is opaque, but as it ascends its skin stretches and begins to scatter light. These balloons are very common and are used throughout Canada for routine weather observation or scientific studies. They are launched by Meteorological Stations, Military posts, Airports and some Universities. During daylight, these balloons are visible to the naked eye up to an altitude of approximately 20,000 feet relative to sky conditions. Above that altitude, they can only be seen with the aid of optical devices or by aircraft. The launching of these balloons is usually preceded by a N.O.T.A.M. ( a NOTAM is a notice to airmen, either sent by letter or teletype to concerned dispatch centers for the brief of pilots. By definition, it is a notice containing information concerning the establishment, condition or change in any aeronautical facility, service, procedure or hazard, the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.).

continued on P. 2

## BALLOONS... CONT'D

In the case of a NOTAM pertaining to a balloon launch, normally the NOTAM will specify the launching site, the type of balloon, its purpose, maximum altitude, approximate course, duration of the flight, time of termination and approximate landing point of the payload. If the balloon malfunctions, or follows a non-specified course, then subsequent NOTAMS will be issued to warn parties concerned to be on the look-out.

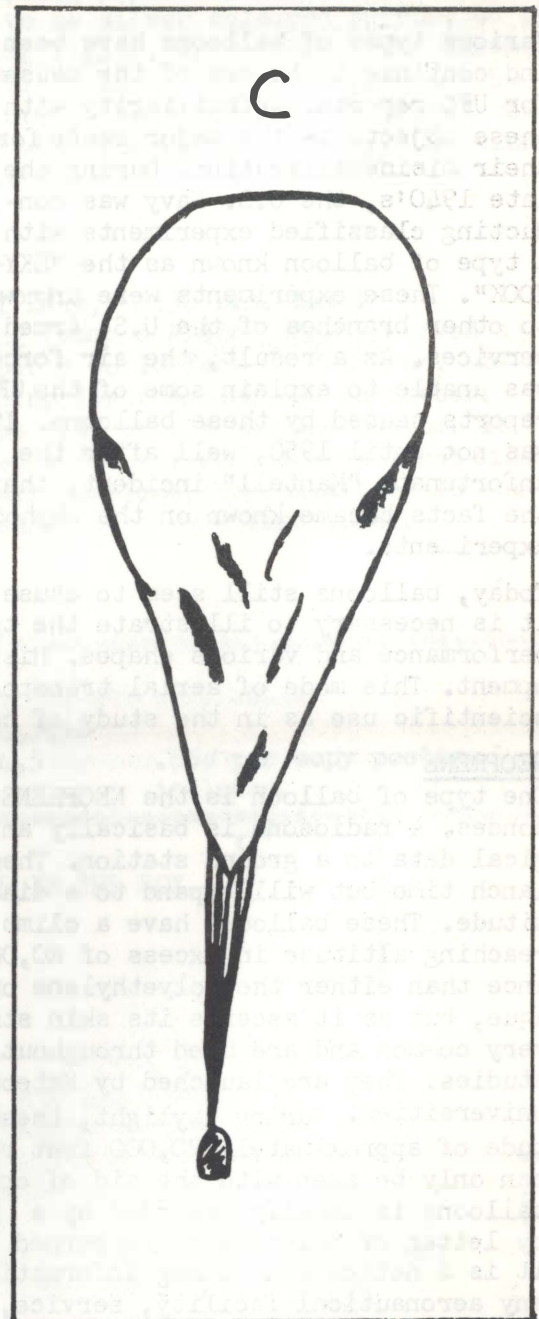
Smaller balloons are "super-pressure" ghost balloons. Usually these carry very small payloads not exceeding a few grams. Normally these are of a spherical configuration. These also expand during their ascent. At 20,000 feet they are about 5 feet in diameter; at 40,000 feet about 7 feet; and 10 feet in diameter at 60,000 feet. Larger balloons of this type have also been flown at higher altitudes. They are capable of remaining aloft for several months and will be carried by the upper winds. At any time, these balloons may develop a leak and begin descending anywhere anytime.

POLYETHYLENE

Another common type of balloon is the POLYETHYLENE variety. These balloons are filled with a so-called "gas bubble" varying from 20-70 feet in diameter prior to launch. A gas bubble of 20 feet will enable the balloon to reach 10,000 feet. The gas inside the balloon will expand as outside air pressure decreases with altitude. Balloons of this type have been, and still are used to carry instruments to study cosmic rays and meteorological conditions. During the 1950's these balloons also carried capsules with humans. These experiments were designed to study the reactions of men to high altitude phenomena. Other uses for human payloads were for the study of the stratosphere

When these balloons reach their maximum altitude, their diameter can range anywhere between 60 - 250 ft., although diameters of 300 - 400 ft. have been achieved in order to carry larger payloads. Depending on the type, size material, time of day and altitude, the visibility will vary. For example, a common radiosonde balloon is visible in daylight to a distance of 2 - 4 miles. The large polyethylene types absorb about 5% of sunlight, but are capable of scattering some 30% of the light. This scattering or re-radiating of light depends on the angle with which the light reaches the balloon's surface. These balloons are visible during daytime and generally not seen during darkness unless they carry flashing strobe lights or other types of identification lights. However, unlit balloons may still be visible after sunset & before sunrise if they are high enough to reflect sunlight which is no longer visible on the ground, in the same way as orbiting satellites do. Although polyethylene balloons are pear shaped, they usually appear spherical to the naked eye. When it is decided to terminate a flight, either a ground station or patrol aircraft sends a command to the balloon and causes it to burst. The payload is then returned to earth by parachute. Sometimes, due to malfunctions, the balloon does not burst even though the payload is released, and will continue to fly for unspecified periods of time,

continued on P. 3



## BALLOONS... CONT'D

forever subjected to the wind speeds and directions. Noteworthy also, is the fact that the gas in the balloon will expand and contract relative to air temperatures & pressures. Therefore, these "lost balloons may sometimes give rise to UFO reports when they are seen at night or daytime bobbing up and down, hovering, speeding up or slowing down, changing in direction and sometimes will appear spectacular if they burst sending out pieces of themselves across the sky.

Let us now examine just how balloons may inspire UFO reports.

On April 1st, 1960, at 6:55 p.m. E.S.T. residents along the east coast of the United States jammed many switchboards with UFO reports. A bright yellow streak of fire was being observed coming up from the horizon into the eastern sky. Accompanying this streak of fire was a red sphere which some people reported to be the size of a full moon. Eventually, the streak of fire disappeared, but the red object was visible emitting green sparks. While over the Atlantic Ocean, this glowing sphere disappeared suddenly. Newspapers, universities, military bases and observatories were flooded with calls from anxious but concerned citizens. NICAP (National Investigation Committee on Aerial Phenomena) considered this to be a genuine UFO report/sighting. All the descriptions fit and all accounts specified the same period. To add, many witnesses were involved. However, this case was investigated immediately and with great care. A true explanation was found. What the witnesses observed was the rocket launching of the prototype of the Echo satellite. This satellite which finally went into orbit much later on was a silver inflatable balloon type. Its diameter being 100 ft. and highly reflective. The streak of fire was the rocket with which the experimental balloon/satellite was carried aloft. The glowing red sphere was the balloon itself reflecting the setting sun and the green sparks were caused by dry powder escaping through vents in the balloon. When this balloon fell back into the earth's shadow, to the observers on the ground it appeared to suddenly disappear.

This confusing incident was cleared up when NASA announced the launching of this satellite from Wallops Island, Virginia. NICAP reluctantly had to admit that they were in agreement with these facts. In their May issue of the UFO INVESTIGATOR, they classified this sighting as a probable balloon sighting, even though the facts were unclear.

Another balloon which caused some excitement occurred on April 30th, 1969 over Puerto Rico. The entire story started with numerous people watching a slow moving steady source of white light in the early morning skies. The reports started that a plane circled the object. The object was estimated to be ten times larger than the airplane. This object was not only being observed by people on the ground. Several airline pilots in the area were seeing it too as well as many Air Traffic Controllers and the local National Guard. Descriptions seemed to conflict however. At times the object was reported as being triangular, sometimes oval, then again cigar shaped, etc.,. An A.T.C. controller even described the object as having some type of cone shaped companion below it. Several F-104 interceptors were dispatched to try and make an identification. The controller stated that the UFO was huge and appeared to be much higher than the F-104s. Even when the jets climbed to 50,000 feet, the object still appeared to be much higher. Finally the two jets were able to get a better view of the object as it seemed to fly lower. The pilots advised that the UFO was approximately 60ft. long, triangular shaped, possibly made of plastic and flying at 70,000 feet. The object was finally identified later as it descended by a B-52 Stratofortress bomber in the area. The so-called UFO was finally intercepted at 35,000 feet and the crew were able to identify it as an ordinary Neoprene balloon carrying a radiosonde below it.

As one can see, with just these two cases, balloons are capable not only of carrying out scientific experiments, but also quite successful in causing some UFO reports can be easily explained away by balloons. There are many types of both man made and natural phenomena which may give rise to UFO reports. Admittedly, at times balloons have been used as scape goats by the authorities as a matter of convenience. There are still some UFO reports which seem to defy all attempts at explanation.

continued on P. 4

BALLOONS... CONT'D

UFO CANADA does not intend to enter into a debate between hard core skeptics and believers. We only wish to report the facts objectively and without any emotional insights. We do however suggest that hard core skeptics take a serious look at the many unexplained reports but in the same spirit we also suggest that the believers also study the data on IFO reports. Perhaps if both groups approach the subject with a more rational approach, maybe the marriage of these two schools of thought may some day give birth to a totally objective baby.

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NOTE: UFO CANADA has access to daily NOTAMS summaries from across Canada and maintains them on file. These summaries include all types of military activity, balloon launchings, satellite decays and rocket launching.

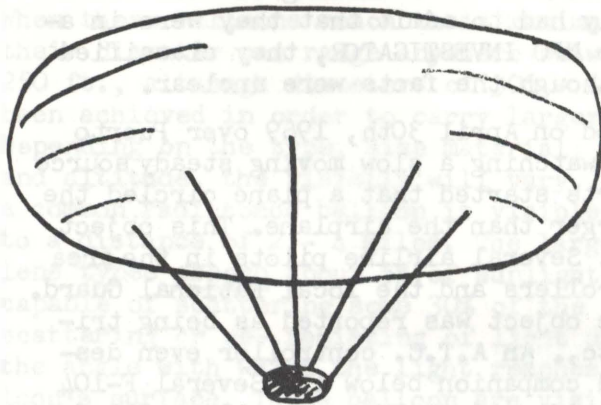
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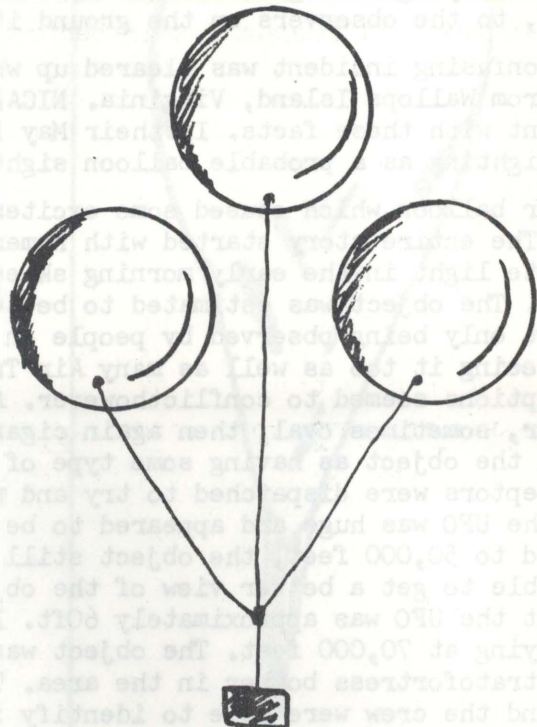
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Reasearch & compiled by Robert Sapienza/UFO CANADA

D



E



- A) NEOPRENE + RADIOSONDE
- B) SKYHOOK AT LAUNCH
- C) SKYHOOK INFLATED
- D) BLIMP / SAUSAGE BALLOON
- E) BALLOON CLUSTER

1X7821

## Special Report

PART # 3 of 5

A POSSIBLE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR CERTAIN CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE UFO PHENOMENA  
(c) September 1978 By Keith Basterfield

E.N. Only five of the 10 reports listed in the original article are presented.

### CASES

1. July 1967 0300 hrs, Palma, Spain

The daughter of Count de Ribas was awakened by an intense light coming from the patio. She saw two small figures at the window, apparently speaking to each other. They had very large heads and huge eyes. The witness tried to turn on the light but it did not work. She went and got her coat. When she returned all had vanished, except two small footprints just outside the window. (6)

2. July 18th, 1967 0130 hrs, Boardman, Ohio, USA

The Rev A DePolo was awakened by a very loud noise, "the type you hear on television science fiction programmes". He felt that a mental message was being conveyed to him. He went downstairs and in the driveway was a 5ft. tall figure wearing a luminous "space suit". The surrounding glow made the figure very distinct. He received another message. Looking up in the sky he saw that the sky was strangely illuminated. When he turned his eyes to the driveway he saw the spot where the figure had been contained a formless blob of light which faded and vanished. He returned to bed and "fell asleep immediately". (7)

3. June 22, 1972 0200 hrs, Logrono, Spain

A 20 year old student was in bed reading, when he suddenly perceived that the room seemed to glow brighter. He put his book down and saw an intensely powerful light was coming through the two leaves of his window. The window opened by itself, and a luminous object entered at a height of two metres. It stopped and the light from it was very brilliant. He tried to sink into bed, terrified. A transistor radio which was switched on although there was no radio station broadcasting then, emitted a high pitched noise, which he taped with a portable recorder. The object put out a beam towards the radio and then the tape recorder. Finally it went straight towards the window and vanished. The student did not go to the window and look out as he was more concerned with getting a recording of the noise. Upon being questioned he said that the radio had visibly swayed when the beam was on it, however, "not a single trace had been left by the passage of the object". (8)

4. October 15, 1973 0100 -0500 hrs, Omro, Wisconsin, USA

The witness was awoken by a brief, high pitched sound and his room was lit up with a bright, orange-red glow. Three humanoids 4-5 feet tall were seen to materialize. They had bald heads, greyish-white wrinkled skin and rounded ears. They moved mechanically. The witness passed out, then came to on the floor, propped against a wall, unable to move. The entities were examining him with an oval object that showed the bones of his legs as it passed over them. He had a severe headache and passed out again. He awakened towards dawn on the floor. He found lights on in the bedroom and the bedsheets folded neatly back. He reported the incident to CUFOS. There are some inconsistencies in the account according to Webb. (9)

5. October 17, 1973 0345 hrs, Pikesville, MD, USA

A woman was awoken by the sound of an explosion. She heard a loud humming, walked out onto the front porch and saw a red, transparent object. On top was a bubble with a human figure standing up. (10)

## Recent Reports From 1979

### Maritime Canada

#### NOVA SCOTIA

January 12th, 1979. Harrietsfield Cove, 2000z

Two women reported the observation of a stationary white object in the direction of the sun. It then moved off into the clouds leaving a vapor trail. Total duration 30 minutes. Possible explanation: Aircraft reflecting sun, time misjudgement. (1)

#### NEWFOUNDLAND

January 17th, 1979. Bonavista, 0910z

An area couple reported the observation of an oval object approximately 20 feet long. The object was grey with red and green flashing lights. It also had a single bright white light which at times became brighter. The witnesses also described what appeared to be antennae on top. Object stayed in one mile line for about 2½ hours. (2)

### Eastern Canada

#### QUEBEC

January 20th, 1979. Port Cartier, 2200z

Several people reported the observation of three oval objects, red, green and blue in colour. The objects moved towards each other in a straight line at the same altitude (which was undetermined). The objects were approximately 50 feet apart. Each one remained at a different location from the other objects. (3)

#### ONTARIO

January 15th, 1979. Northwest Hanner, 11:00 hrs. local

One person reported the observation of a bright sort of grey light. It appeared to be bouncing up and down and disappeared after approximately one minute. The observer was outdoors at the time and first sighted the light in the sky. (4)

### Western Canada

#### SASKATCHEWAN

January 4th, 1979. 6 miles west of Perdue, 1212 GMT

One witness reported the observation of a cylinder-shaped object approximately 70-80 feet long and 30-40 feet wide. It appeared to be a dull green colour with a yellow florescent glow underneath. The object moved slowly at an approximate altitude of 100 feet - hovered over a creek for about 4 minutes. (5)

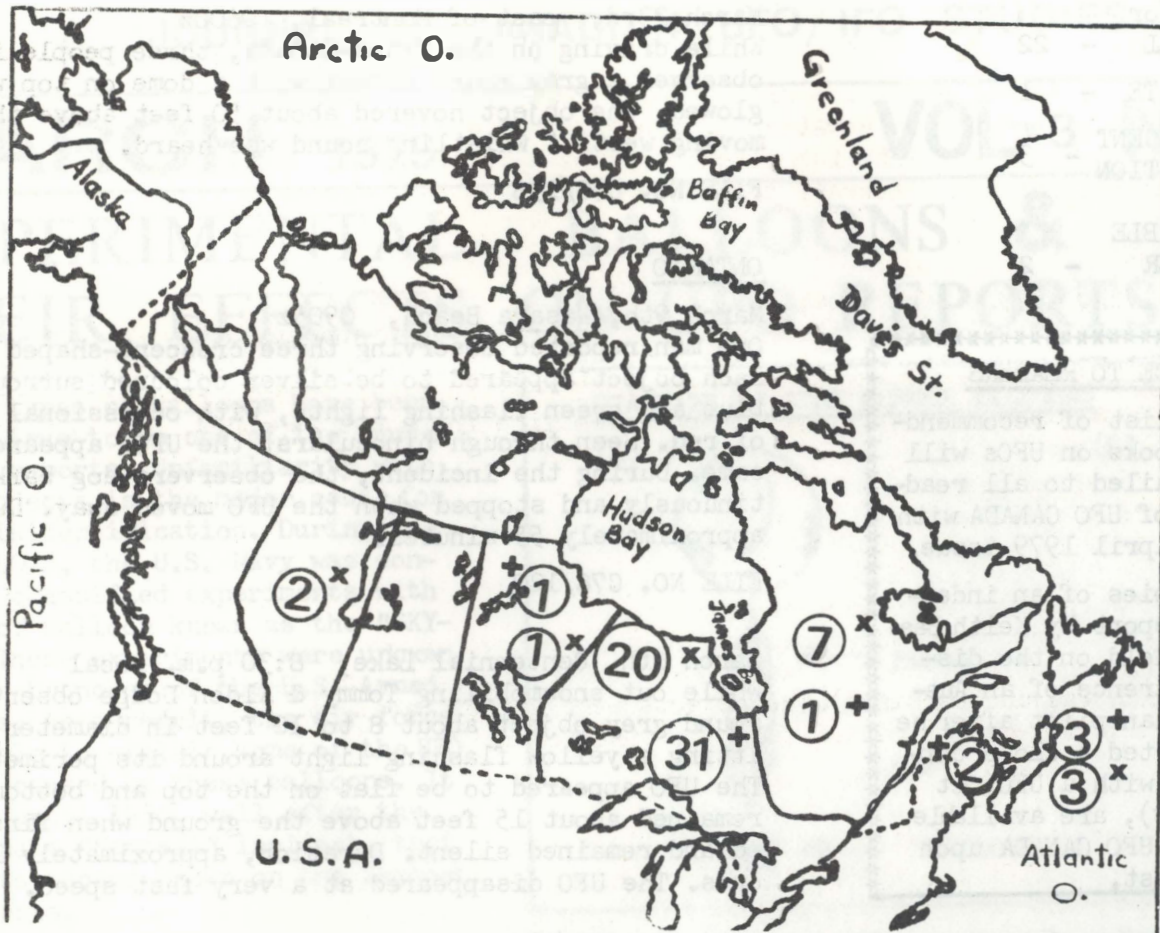
#### ALBERTA

January 15th, 1979. Edmonton, Afternoon (exact time unknown)

A cameraman videotaped a glowing cigar-shaped object which remained in a vertical position for several minutes. The object made no sound and appeared to be a uniform yellow. According to the press reports, an unidentified telephone caller told a local newspaper that the light was the result of a prank by university students during a week - long festival of pranks. John Hope, director of the Queen Elizabeth Planetarium said that the photograph appears to be a vapor trail from a jet aircraft. (6)

SOURCES: (1) NRC/N79/006 (2) NRC/N79/011 (3) NRC/N79/012 (4) NRC/N79/008  
(5) NRC/N79/002 (6) ST.CATHERINES STANDARD - January 16 & 17, 1979

# CANADA - UFO/ IFO Summary For March 1978



The numbers which appear on the map, represent the total number of UFO & IFO reports for that particular province for MARCH 1978.

UFO REPORTS: x

IFO REPORTS: +

The following is a summary of UFO/IFO reports received and compiled by UFO CANADA, for MARCH 1978. The yearly delay, provides ample time for a complete summary.

REPORT DISTRIBUTION

<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>UFO</u>	<u>IFO</u>
YUKON (Territory)	-	-
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES	-	-
BRITISH COLUMBIA	-	-
ALBERTA	2	-
SASKATCHEWAN	-	-
MANITOBA	1	1
ONTARIO	20	31
QUEBEC	7	1
NEW BRUNSWICK	-	2
NOVA SCOTIA	3	3
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	-	-
NEWFOUNDLAND	-	-

TYPES OF REPORTS

NL - 24	CE1 - 6
DD - 4	CE2 - 0
RV - 0	CE3 - 0

TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTS

UFO - 34 IFO - 38  
5 reports unclassified.

continued on page 8

SUMMARY... CONT'D

I.F.O. BREAKDOWN

AIRCRAFT - 15  
 METEOR/or  
 FIREBALL - 22  
 SATELLITE - 1  
 INSUFFICIENT  
 INFORMATION - 3  
 UNRELIABLE  
 OBSERVER - 2

REPORTS OF INTEREST FOR MARCH 1978

QUEBEC

March 23rd, east of Montreal, 0600z  
 While driving on the Trans-Canada, three people in a car observed a grey round object with a dome on top which glowed. The object hovered about 50 feet above the car, moving west. A whistling sound was heard.

FILE NO. C78/138

ONTARIO

March 9th, Wasaga Beach, 0905z  
 One man reported observing three crescent-shaped objects. Each object appeared to be silver coloured surrounded by blue and green flashing lights, with occasional flashes of red. Seen through binoculars, the UFOs appeared the same. During the incident, the observers dog barked continuously and stopped when the UFO moved away. Duration approximately 55 minutes.

FILE NO. C78/120

March 6th, Centennial Lake, 8:30 p.m. local  
 While out snowmobiling Tommy & Alden Dodge observed a round grey object about 8 to 10 feet in diameter, emitting a yellow flashing light around its perimeter. The UFO appeared to be flat on the top and bottom. It remained about 15 feet above the ground when first sighted and remained silent. Duration, approximately 10 seconds. The UFO disappeared at a very fast speed.

FILE NO. C78/098

\*\*\*\*\*  
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 \* be mailed to all read- \*  
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 \* terfield on the dis- \*  
 \* appearance of an Aus- \*  
 \* tralian pilot after he \*  
 \* reported a close con- \*  
 \* tact with a UFO(Oct . \*  
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