2

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident #59

ATIC NO. - - -

AF NO. - - -

REPORT NO. - - -

DATE OF REPORT - - -

TIME OF SIGHTING 0558Z Sunset plus 45 Min.

SHAPE Like Meteor

SIZE - - -

COURSE 350 degrees to 110 degrees

NO. IN GROUP 1

SOUND - - -

PHOTOS - - - SKETCHES - - -

DATE OF INFO 12 Sept 1947

LOCATION Midway Island to Oshu - beyond Necker I.

SOURCE Civilian Pilots

DATE IN TO ATIC - - -

COLOR White to Red

SPEED 1160 mph (1000 knots) Estimated / Measured / Estimated / Measured

ALTITUDE 9,500'

LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED 6 sec.

TYPE OF OBSERVATION Aerial

MANEUVERS Abruptly changed course but altitude & horizontal flight maintained.

Temporary ATIC Form 329
(1 Jan 52)

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Meteor

[redacted]

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Incident #59 -- beyond Necker Island — 12 September 1947

From the evidence at hand, it appears quite likely that the object observed was a fireball. Fireballs have been known to change course abruptly when splitting. The reported change to reddish hue from the previous color of incandescent light, the length of time in sight, and the manner of disappearance all lend support to this hypothesis. At sunset one can expect relatively slow-moving, nearly horizontal fireballs.

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

(Old Naval Station)

16 September 1947

Memo for: DIO-14ND.

Subj: Unidentified Object in Flight Observed by Pan American Pilots.

1. At approximately 1000 on 13 September 1947, reporting agent received a telephone call from Lt. Comdr. [redacted], USN, Air-Sea Rescue Operations Officer attached to Commander Hawaiian Sea Frontier, reporting that a Pan American plane in flight from Midway Island to Oahu on the previous evening had sighted an unusual object in flight about 0500 GCT. Arrangements were made by reporting agent to meet Lt. Comdr. [redacted] and the Pan American pilots at the District Intelligence Office at 1130 that date.

2. With Captain R. R. Lyons, USN, District Intelligence Officer, 14th Naval District, present, Lt. Comdr. YOUNG and Pan American officers were interviewed by the reporting agent. They were, respectively: [redacted], Plane Captain, who has been flying for Pan American for ten years, has 7000 hours in the air, and has flown routes over both the north and south Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean between the Philippines and the Mainland; [redacted], Second Officer, who has 11 years in aviation, 1700 hours in the air, has been in with Pan American one year on the Pacific route, and for four years was in the Army Air Force flying B-24's in combat flight in the south Pacific, as well as on East Coast training duty. Both aviators impressed reporting agent as completely reliable, intelligent, and keen observers who were attempting to give a factual explanation of an unusual phenomenon.

3. The information as supplied by Pilot [redacted], and concurred in by [redacted], is as follows: The Pan American plane was eastbound from Midway on magnetic course 98, which is approximately 110 true, flying at 9000 feet and making 205 knots. The plane was flying on the automatic pilot with [redacted] in the right-hand seat in the control cabin and [redacted] in the left-hand seat. It was dark and at about 9000 feet there were cumulus clouds of about .4 density. Both agreed that the sun had set about 45 minutes previously.

4. The Pan American plane had passed Necker Island at 0535 GCT. At 0553 GCT a white light was observed about 60 degrees off the starboard bow of the plane. This light, according to [redacted], appeared to be the light of an approaching airplane except that it was extremely intense. It had the color of an incandescent light without appreciable blue and no reddish tinge. The object appeared to be on a course about 330 degrees true, and when first observed was estimated to be about five miles away. The

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

16 September 1947

Subj: Unidentified Object in Flight Observed by Pan American Pilots.

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light grew in size and intensity, but without any change in color, to a point that was estimated to be one mile off the starboard bow of the plane.

5. The pilots were about to switch from the automatic pilot to manual control when the subject veered suddenly to an approximate course of 109 degrees and then the bright light appeared to split into two parts and assumed a reddish hue. These two reddish lights did not have the intensity of the white light and appeared to be about a wing-length apart. As the object changed course, the extraordinary speed was appreciated. The object far outraced the Pan American plane and the twin lights appeared to burn out at an estimated 30 miles ahead of the Pan American plane. The entire phenomenon, both agreed, was observed for about six seconds. [redacted] roughly estimated that the object was traveling at 1000 knots.

6. Both observers expressed familiarity with meteors and usual astronomical phenomena and agreed it could have been a meteor except for the manner in which it held altitude. At no time did the object appear to get above 10,000 feet or below 9,500 feet. When it disappeared, the object still appeared to have about 9,500 feet altitude. At no time did the object give off sufficient illumination to reflect on the cloud formation at 8,000 feet. Both observers were questioned at length about the possibility of an optical illusion and the probability of the object dropping at an oblique angle, but both firmly declared that the object apparently changed course and that it appeared to hold altitude throughout the entire time it was observed.

7. This information was passed by telephone to Fleet Intelligence Officer, Pacific Fleet, and to A-2 of the 7th Air Force at Hickam Field. No evaluation of the unidentified object was possible by any of these agencies.

JAMES C. O'NEIL
Intelligence Analyst

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OPNAV-16-139

61.051

mb

DATE OF LETTER

16 Sep 47

DATE RC'D ONI

19 Sep 47

KEYED IN

TO	INITIAL
52V	

22 Sept.

OUT (DATE)

ORIGINATOR

1. DIO, 14 ND

2.

ORIGINATOR'S FILE NUMBER

C-0146

ADDRESSED TO

ONI

VIA

ONI FILE NUMBER

1.

2.

SUBJECT

1. Unidentified Object in Flight Observed by Pan American Pilots.

2.

REFERENCES-ENCLOSURES-ENDORSEMENTS

Encl: (A) Copy of Memo for DIO#14ND, dtd 16 Sep 47, same subj. (W)

SECONDARY ROUTING BY

TO (2)	INITIAL	TO (3)	INITIAL	TO (4)	INITIAL	TO (5)	INITIAL	TO (6)	INITIAL	TO (7)	INITIAL
VA		DAB									
FOR		FOR		FOR		FOR		FOR		FOR	
OUT (DATE)		OUT (DATE)		OUT (DATE)		OUT (DATE)		OUT (DATE)		OUT (DATE)	

COMMENTS AND REMARKS

DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR INTERVALS: NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED. DOD DIR 5200.10

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1. O. N. I. ROUTING SLIP --- FINISHED FILE COPY --- DO NOT DETACH

FOURTEENTH NAVAL DISTRICT
Naval Headquarters
Navy No. 128
Honolulu, T. H.

MAIL ROOM
SEP 19 1947
OPNAV

14ND/A11/A6-2
Serial 0-0746

UNCLASSIFIED

16 September 1947

From: District Intelligence Officer, 14th Naval District.
To: Chief of Naval Intelligence.

Subj: Unidentified Object in Freight Observed by Pan American Pilots.

Encl: (A) Copy of Memo for DIO-14ND, dtd 16 Sept. 1947, same subject.

1. Enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith for information.

R. R. LYONS

cc: ONI (OP-16-F-4) (2)
A-2, 7th Air Force, Hickam Field (1)

[redacted]

Plane had just passed Necker Island at 0535 GCT. At 0558 GCT an intense white light was observed 60° off starboard bow of plane. It appeared similar to the light of an approaching plane except that it was extremely intense. The color was that of an incandescent light without appreciable blue and no reddish tinge. It appeared on a course about 350° true some 5 miles away. The light grew in intensity (but without any change in color) to a point estimated to be one mile off starboard bow of the plane. When the PA plane switched over to manual control the object suddenly veered to an approximate course of 109° and then the bright light appeared to split into two parts and assumed a reddish hue. These two reddish lights did not have the intensity of the white light and appeared about a wing-length apart. As it changed its course the extraordinary speed was noted. It far outraced the Pan American plane and the twin lights appeared to burn out 30 miles ahead. The entire phenomenon was observed for some six seconds. Object was estimated to be traveling 1,000 knots per hour.

NOTE: Both observers thought it could have been a meteor except for the manner in which it held altitude. At no time did it appear to get above or below 9,500 ft. When it disappeared it still seemed at about 9,500 ft. at no time did it give off sufficient illumination to reflect on the cloud formation at 8,000 ft.

Both observers were questioned as to possibility of optical illusion and the probability that the object dropped at an oblique angle but both firmly declared the object apparently changed course and that it appeared to hold altitude throughout the entire time observed.

PAA plane was eastbound from Midway on magnetic course 98, which is approximately 110° true, and flying at 9,000 feet at about 205 knots. It was flying on automatic pilot with [redacted] in the right-hand seat in the control cabin and [redacted] in the left-hand seat. It was dark and there were cumulus clouds of about .4 density. The sun had set 45 minutes previously.

[redacted]

[redacted] 8

CHECK-LIST - UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident # 59

1. Date 12 Sept 47

2. Time 45 minutes after sunset

3. Location Midway Island to Oahu - beyond Necker Island

4. Name of observer Capt [redacted] &
2d Officer [redacted]

5. Occupation of observer Pilot and 2d officer, PAA

6. Address of observer N/S

7. Place of observation Beyond Necker Island (23° 34' N 164° 42' W)

8. Number of objects 1

9. Distance of object from observer 1 mile

10. Time in sight Six seconds

11. Altitude 9,500 to 10,000 ft

12. Speed 1160 MPH (1000 knots)

13. Direction of flight 350° then 109°

14. Tactics Abruptly changed course but observed horizontal flight holding altitude

15. Sound N/S

16. Size N/S

17. Color N/S (See below - exhaust)

18. Shape N/S

19. Odor detected N/S

DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR INTERVALS; NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED. DOD DIR 5200.10

20. Apparent construction N/S

21. Exhaust trails N/S - light the color of an incandescent light without appreciable blue & no reddish tinge

22. Weather conditions dark - 45 minutes after sunset

23. Effect on clouds No effect on clouds

24. Sketches or photographs None

25. Manner of disappearance Appeared to burn out 30 miles ahead of PA plane

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26. Remarks: (over)

[redacted]

12b

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.