[redacted] UNCLASSIFIED (Incident #118

ATIC NO. ----

AF 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 May 48

LOCATION Berlin, Germany

SOURCE Former German guided missile expert

DATE IN TO ATIC ----

COLOR white

SPEED rather fast

ALTITUDE 14 kilometers

LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED ----

TYPE OF OBSERVATION ground

MANEUVERS ----

Temporary ATIC Form 329
(2 Jan 52)

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

CHECK-LIST - UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

Incident #18

1. Date 28 Mar 48
2. Time 1630 hours
3. Location Berlin Lichtenrade, Kirchhochstrasse 2
4. Name of observer [redacted],
5. Occupation of observer Former guided missile expert at Rheinmetall Borsig
6. Address of observer Berlin Lichtenrade, Kirchhochstrasse 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)

[redacted], former Guided Missile expert at Rheinmetall, 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.

[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

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

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

HQATSC Form No. 100-681A
(26 SEP 44)

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

AIR TECHNICAL SERVICE COMMAND

CLASSIFIED CABLE AND MESSAGE SECTION--ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

INCOMING MESSAGE

May 1948

IN 062222Z

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

PRIORITY

FROM: WASHINGTON 061900Z EUCOM SGD HUEBNER

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

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 EXEINMETALL 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

INFORMATION COPY

DISTRIBUTION: EJK
1. MCI - Action - transferred to MCIA per MCI 5-7
2. MCAAGM21
3. MCIAX[illegible] - Attn: Col Boem - Info

UNCLASSIFIED

COPY No. 3

[redacted]

THE MAKING OF AN EXACT COPY OF THIS MESSAGE IS FORBIDDEN P-2b786

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.

WP 13 FEB 45 FSM

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.

As cut from
LOOK Magazine.

UFO form continued

Indeed, at the time I was married to [redacted], 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, instinctly 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 quit long ago. The year I cannot even tell correctly. But it was after 1946.

Sincerely Yours,

[redacted]

Official U.S. Air Force U

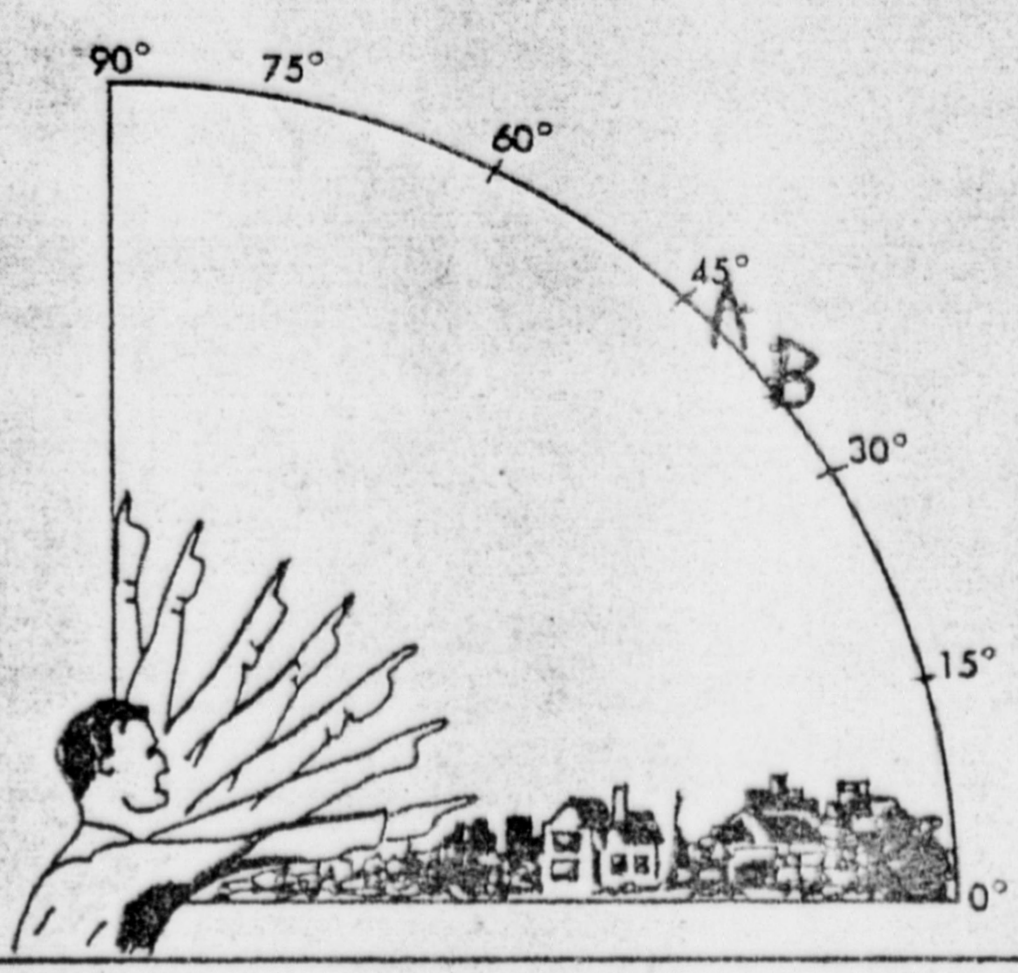
34. Date you completed this questionnaire: 10 (Day) 2 (Month) 1962 (Year)

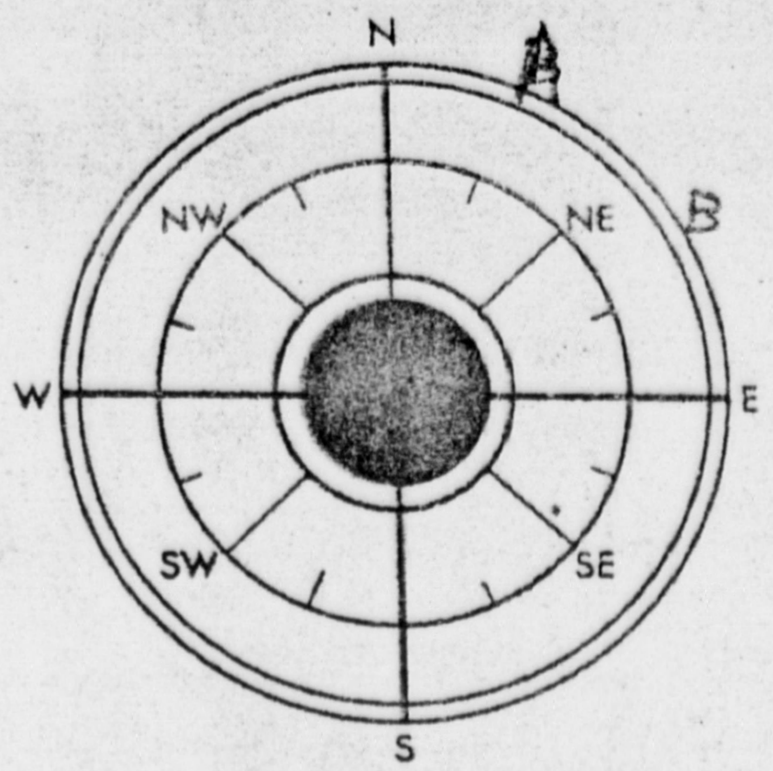
35. Information which you feel pertinent and which is not adequately covered in the specific points of the questionnaire or a narrative explanation of your sighting.

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.

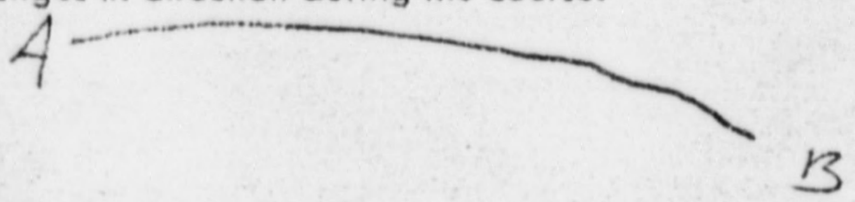
The reason I didn't even talk about those shiny spots in the sky was, you wouldn't take it as a reason: What I saw was beyond my power of thinking. I knew all the flying things what it could have been, but couldn't think of any human made object, so I shut myself off and thought: it's not from earth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

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.



30. Have you ever seen this, or a simil[illegible]ject before. If so give date or dates and location.

Several nights

31. Was anyone else with you at the time you saw the object? *(Circle One)* Yes (No)

31.1 IF you answered YES, did they see the object too? *(Circle One)* Yes No

31.2 Please list their names and addresses:

32. Please give the following information about yourself:

NAME [redacted] (Last Name) [redacted] (First Name) [redacted] (Middle Name)

ADDRESS [redacted] (Street) Daly City (City) [redacted] (Zone) CALIF. (State)

TELEPHONE NUMBER [redacted] AGE 46 SEX F,

Indicate any additional information about yourself, including any special experience, which might be pertinent.

33. When and to whom did you report that you had seen the object? [redacted]

____ (Day) ____ (Month) 1966 (Year)

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	(Yes)	No	e. Binoculars	(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 squeesed flat, without sparles, and got blue ish light

64

Official U.S. Air Forc

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:

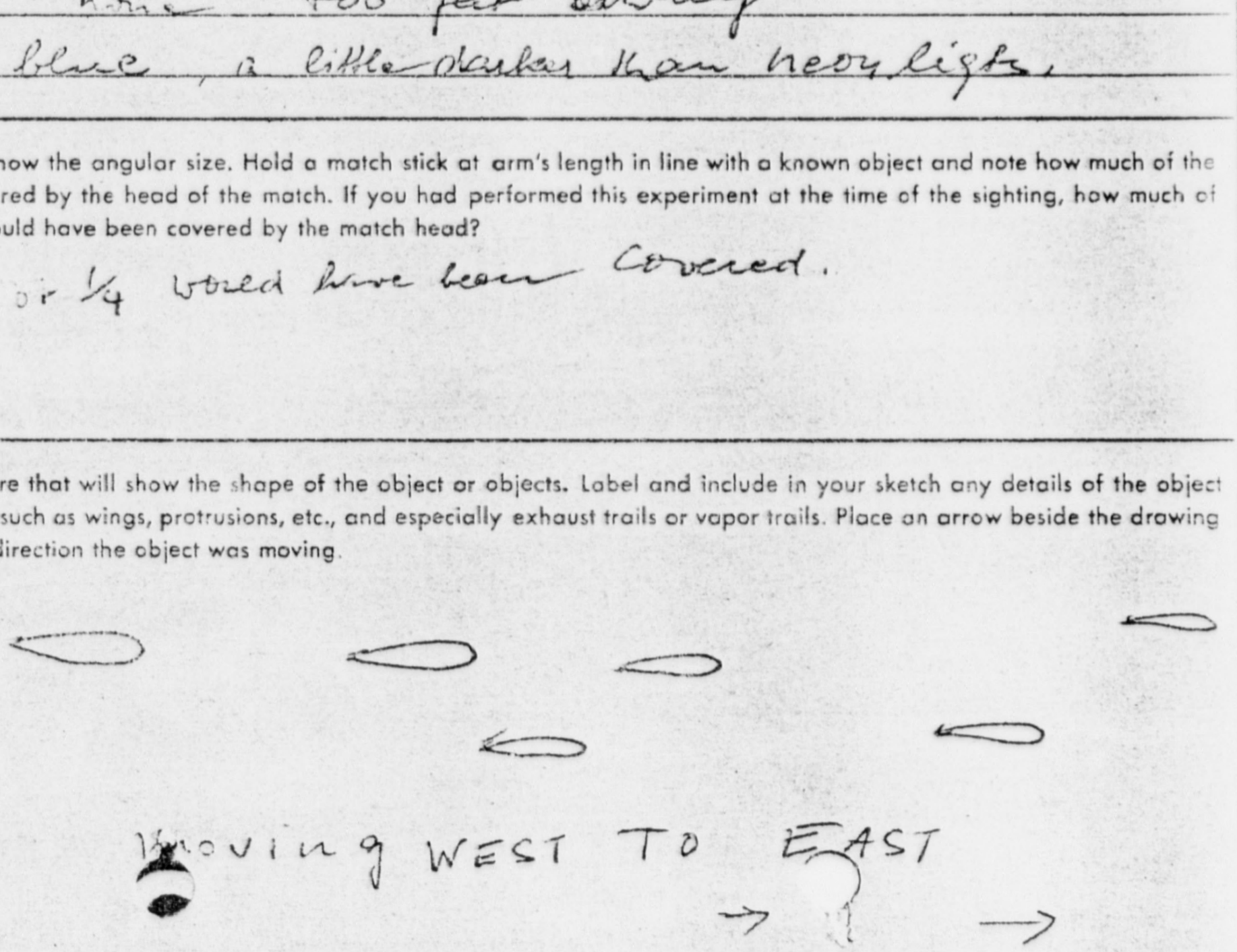
a. Sound none too far away

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 OR (c.) About the same
b. Dimmer
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?	(Yes)	No	Don't know
b. Suddenly speed up and rush away at any time?	Yes	(No)	Don't know
c. Break up into parts or explode?	Yes	(No)	Don't know
d. Give off smoke?	Yes	(No)	Don't know
e. Change brightness?	Yes	(No)	Don't know
f. Change shape?	Yes	(No)	Don't know
g. Flash or flicker?	Yes	(No)	Don't know
h. Disappear and reappear?	Yes	(No)	Don't know

7-8712-5

OFFICIAL U.S. AIR I

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 ? 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?

KFAR ATA Nearest Postal Address — near HAIFA 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	NIGHT
a. Bright	(a.) Bright
b. Cloudy	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

FORM FTD OCT 62 164 This form supersedes FTD 164, jul 61, which is obsolete.

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 AAF, Langley Field, Virginia
Commanding Officer, Flight Service, Washington 25, D.C.
Commanding Officer, 7Ath A F BU, 102nd Weather Group, Mitchel Field Hempstead, New York

1. Flight Plan: 7 Jan 1947 NG3869 4-P51 Mantell Mariette 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. ID 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 Marrietta Ga. to Standiford Fld, Louisville Ky and requested him to investigate unidentified baloon like object hovering in the sky in the vicinity of Godman Field. Three of the ships started to climb toward the objects. Pilot Hendricks in NG336C continued on and landed LOUIC at Standiford Field Louisville Ky. Pilots Hemond, NG757 & Clements NG800, climbed to 22,000 feet with Mantell in NG3869 when 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 1750Z 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
(Incl 7)

DE ARMOND E. MATTHEWS
Major, USAF
Deputy Commander

123.50

-32-

Desoptin of Objects - Godman Observers

H. el. Haven - circular, resembled full moon
Pfc [illegible] - } Cone shaped
Sgt Blackwell }
Lt. Orner - Round and white
Ltcl. Wood - hanging in the sky
Col Hext - 1/4 size of full moon, stationary.
white

Desoptin of object seen at Clinton AFB.

A. Observers at Wilmington, site of Clinton AFB stated that a cone shaped object, which is what an partially inflated sky hook balloon would look like, it was in sight for appx 30. sec stated it disappeared in general SW direction.

B. 2 observers described it as an inverted triangle or a cone - it changed and decreased. It moved to the SW - when it disappeared. Wind was from NE to SW. which is in the exact direction of GODMAN.

CONE
INVERTED TRIANGLE
partially inflated balloon

Debriefing [illegible] description

See Page 59-60 of
- Ruppert's book, re
his comments on
Mantell case

Right. but exhibit is the WC and they knew plot?

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

11. RESULTS OF CRASH: Pilots F. Mantell Jr., Captain - fatal.

12. NARRATION OF EVENTS: On the 7th 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. Redmond, 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 come 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

i. At 16,000 feet, Lt. Clements, the right wingman, put on his oxygen mask and began breathing oxygen. (Exhibit h)

j. Captain Mantell, the flight leader and Lt. Hammond, the left wingman, did not have oxygen or oxygen masks. (Exhibits h and 5)

k. At 15,000 feet, Lt. Clements attempted to pull up close to the flight leader and signal him with hand signals to listen out on Channel D. (Exhibit h)

l. Captain Mantell had at no time signaled for a change over to "D" baner Channel which is customary procedure for the flight leader. (Exhibit h)

m. At 20,000 feet, Lt. Clements advised Captain Mantell that their ETA for Standiford had elapsed and suggested that he notify (Atlanta tower to relay their position to Flight Service to which Captain Mantell replied "Roger." (Exhibit h)

n. A few minutes later, Captain Mantell called the flights attention to a city with an airport beside it, which was identified by Lt. Clements as Bowling Green. (Exhibit h)

o. At approximately 20,000 feet, Captain Mantell called the flights attention to an object at 1200 o'clock. (Exhibit h 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 h)

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 h)

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 h)

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 h)

t. From 18,000 feet on, the point at which the high blower cut in, Lt. Clements had to use full power to maintain his position in the formation. (Exhibit h)

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 h)

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 CST, 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 aircraft 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 judgment 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 observed in the rapid ascent of Captain Mantell, will produce symptoms of acute anoxia in a very short time. If publication

[redacted]

123000

-37-

[redacted]

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.

c. At the time Lt. Clements and Lt. Hammond, who incidently, 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 occassionaly 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 percipitated 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.

e. 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 altitudes without the proper oxygen equipment.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

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.

[redacted]

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 0-806 873, Pilot.

LEE J. MERKEL
Captain ANG
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.

24

WAR DEPARTMENT
AAF Form No. 14
(Rev. 1 Oct. 46)

RESTRICTED WHEN ENTRIES ARE MADE HEREON

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 OFFICE—DO NOT USE THIS SPACE

ACTION	DATE
PRELIMINARY (IF NOT RECEIVED)	1-8
FORM 14 RECEIVED	1-20
EVALUATED BY	2-1
VERIFIED BY	2-17
CHECKED BY	
CODED BY	2-17

TYPE, MODEL AND SERIES: P-51-D

ACCIDENT NO.

NO. AIRCRAFT INVOLVED

Section A—GENERAL INFORMATION

1. PLACE OF ACCIDENT—State, County, Nearest Town, Distance and Direction from same.	Nearest Army Airfield, Distance and Direction from same.
Kentucky, Simpson, Franklin, 3.5 miles SW	Godman Field, 90 miles SSW

2. WAS COLLISION WITH OTHER AIRCRAFT?	AF NOS. OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED (File separate Form 14 for each aircraft)	DATE	HOUR AND TIME ZONE	
☐ Yes ☒ No		7 Jan 48	1515 CST	☒ Day ☐ Night

Section B—AIRCRAFT

1. AIRCRAFT NO.	2. TYPE	MODEL	SERIES	3. HOME STATION
44-63869	P	51	D	Standiford Field, Louisville, Ky.

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

5. DATE OF MANUFACTURE	TOTAL HOURS	DATE LAST OVERHAUL	OVERHAULING DEPOT OR SUB-DEPOT	HOURS SINCE OVERHAUL
13 Dec 44	172:30	none	none	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	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE INITIAL	GRADE	BRANCH	ASN	SEX	AGE
MANTELL,	THOMAS	F. JR.	Captain	KYANG	0-806873	M	25

2. ATTACHED STATION	AF OR COMMAND	SUBCOMMAND	WING	GROUP NO. AND TYPE	SQUADRON
	11th AAF			123	

3. ASSIGNED STATION	AF OR COMMAND	SUBCOMMAND	WING	GROUP NO. AND TYPE	SQUADRON
Standiford Field, Ky	11th AAF		55th	123rd Ftr Gp	165th

4. AERONAUTICAL RATING?	PRESENT RATING	DATE RECEIVED	5. NORMAL DUTY STATUS
☐ Yes ☒ No	Pilot	6-30-43	Pilot

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

FLYING TIME	1ST PILOT OR SOLO STUDENT	OTHER PILOT OR OTHER STUDENT
1. TOTAL HOURS	1608:00	1259:00
2. HOURS THIS TYPE	67:00	
3. HOURS THIS MODEL	67:00	
4. HOURS LAST 30 DAYS	41:00	
5. HOURS LAST 30 DAYS	14:00	
6. HOURS LAST 24 HOURS	2:00	
7. ACTUAL COMBAT HOURS	107:00	54:00

Fill in items 8 and 9 only if operator was student in training or rated pilot in CTS, OTU, etc.

8. TRAINEE CLASS NO. AND SCHOOL, OTU, CCTS, ETC.

9. PHASE AND HOURS IN THIS PHASE

PHASE	DUAL OR COPILOT	SOLO OR 1ST PILOT
B		

10. AAF SCHOOLS PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED AND DATES

A/C Training- Marianna AAF
Marianna, Fla.
17 Sept 42- 29 June 43

11. INSTRUMENT RATING

TYPE	DATE
White	1-6-49

LAST CHECK STATION	DATE
Standiford	1-6-48

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

If answer to number 12 is Yes, or if accident occurred at night or under instrument or unknown conditions, fill in items 13 through 17.

HOURS	1ST PILOT	OTHER
13. TOTAL—INSTRUMENT		
14. INSTRUMENT LAST 6 MOS.		
15. INSTRUMENT LAST 30 DAYS		
16. NIGHT—LAST 6 MOS.		
17. NIGHT, LAST 30 DAYS		

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

DUTY AT TIME OF ACCIDENT (1)	NAME (Last Name First) (2)	TYPE OF AERO. RATING (Symbols) (3)	SERIAL NO. (4)	GRADE AND BRANCH OF SERVICE (5)	PERS. CLASS. SYMBOL (AAF Reg. 35-1) (6)	ORG. ASSIGNMENT—AIR FORCE OR COMMAND, GROUP NUMBER AND TYPE, STATION (7)	FATAL, MAJOR, MINOR, NONE, MISSING OR UNKNOWN (8)	PARACHUTES USED (9) (10)	PARACHUTES SUCCESSFUL (11) (12)
OP	MANTELL, THOMAS F. JR.	P	0-806873	Capt. KYANG	8	11AF123FG Standiford Fld.	Fatal		X

O. K. FOR FILES
BY

Section F—DAMAGE

Describe briefly the extent of the damage with respect. (If no damage, write "None." If aircraft is missing, write "Missing." If aircraft was totally wrecked, so state)

TO AIRCRAFT

Aircraft totally wrecked

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

TO PRIVATE PROPERTY (EXPLAIN ON ATTACHMENT)

Section G—POWER PLANT FAILURE

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

I. 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	2			
PROPELLER-HOURS SINCE MAJOR OVERHAUL				

STATEMENT OF OPERATOR, IF AVAILABLE, OR BRIEFING 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

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

Section H—AIRFRAME, LANDING GEAR, OR OTHER MATERIEL

(Use this section if material 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 THE TIME OF FAILURE AND ALL FACTORS WHICH MIGHT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE FAILURE

1 2 3 4 5 6

ENGINEERING OFFICER (Name, Grade, and Station) ___

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)

DID ANY ITEM OF 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 AIRWAYS

(Use this section if the airport or its facilities or airways facilities were a contributing factor in the accident, either because of inadequate, overdue, 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

2. WHAT WAS THE MISSION?

Ferry and Navigational training 3

3. DID FIRE OCCUR UPON CRASHING? ☐ Yes ☒ No

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

Violated AAF Reg. 60-16 Par. 43. How ever 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

-3-

5. DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN OR CONTEMPLATED

6. KIND OF CLEARANCE (Attach Form 23)	FROM	TO	OR LOCAL	STATION OF LAST DEPARTURE
Form 23 (O)	Marietta, Ga.	Standiford Field, Ky.		Marietta, Ga.

7. IF UR FORM 54 HAS BEEN SUBMITTED ON ANY FEATURE 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 REGULATION 62-14? ☒ Yes ☐ No

9. ARE PHOTOS ATTACHED? ☒ Yes ☐ No

16—41230—1

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, AND ACTION TAKEN

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 wing man 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 masks. 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.

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BOARD

Standiford Field, Kentucky

[illegible] Air Service Command

[illegible] Air Service Command





[illegible] Lt. [illegible] it in a climb at [illegible]
also to discern a bright approaching object, very small, and [illegible]
be unable to identify it as to kind, shape, color, but it was definitely
something which could be seen. It's position was slightly lower and to
the left of the sun. This was at approximately 1715. I called Capt.
Mantell and told him I could see the object but suggested that since we
did seem to be making a gain on the object, that it would be better if
I broke off and tried to pick up some speed and possibly get under the object.
By this time they (although I had continued climbing about right to
25,000 feet) 20 minutes and that it appears would be a one-way [illegible]
great [illegible] the object, so I [illegible] down.

From the time that the high blower kicked in at about 18,000 on up
even though I was using Lean normal power setting all along, it was
[illegible] that it was the high velocity with the [illegible]
flight out of formation and Capt. Mantell disappeared, while [illegible]
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 acknowl-
edge. Through the later stages of this climb Lt. Hammond was [illegible]
that he was having trouble because of his lack of oxygen and
down to a lower [illegible] altitude. From the time we broke off from the formation,
we began a rather sharp descent back on course to Standiford Field, about
40° and finally established contact with Godman Tower [illegible]
tion report and our destination, and asking that he [illegible]
contact Capt. Mantell and inform him that we were returning in case 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
when last seen he seemed to be [illegible] the object under perfect control
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 Standiford
Field, landing without further incident at approximately 1820. As near as I
can recall, the last time we saw Capt. Mantell was approximately 1645. At no
time did I observe Capt. Mantell to be in trouble and just [illegible]
stages of the flight, prior to our breaking off of formation, did I realize
that the object of this high rate of climb and unusual heading [illegible] two or
three [illegible] destination was. By the time that I switched to Godman Tower,
after we started climbing, we were apparently out of range of the Selman
Tower. In conjunction with the last time that we left Capt. Mantell I
was to judge our position to be about 40 miles southeast of Standiford Field.

s/Albert V. Clarke
ALBERT V. CLARKE
1st Lt., AC, Pilot

I CERTIFY THIS COPY:

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

DECLASSIFIED

WAR DEPARTMENT
AAF FORM No. 23
REVISED AUG. 15, 1943

ARMY AIR FORCES
AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE

OPERATING OFFICE: MARIETTA ARMY AIR FIELD
ADDRESS: MARIETTA, GEORGIA

16-15-8083-6

DATE: 7 Jan 1948

PILOT'S NAME	RANK	HOME STATION	ORGANIZATION	AIRCRAFT NUMBER
B T.F.Mantell Jr. O-806873	Capt.	DXI.	165th Ftr Sq.	44-63869

NAME, INITIALS, RANK, HOME STATION OF OTHER OCCUPANTS			
R.K. Hendricks	1st. Lt.	O-2063831	73336
A.I. Clements	1st. Lt.	O-732166	73800
B.J. Hammond	2nd. Lt.	O-2085976	73737

I certify that that weight and balance on this aircraft is identical with that shown on Form F filed at DXI
Date 1-18 Pilots Int. TFM

This aircraft is equipped with Instruments and flashlight for IFR and Night Flights. Pilots Int. TFM

LIST ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS ON SEPARATE SHEET

C. WEATHER DATA — EXISTING LOCAL

EXISTING ROUTE: A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
/s/ Edwin A. Wood
DESTINATION (LATEST): EDWIN A. WOOD
ALTERNATE (LATEST): Capt. USAF
TIME: Operations Officer

ALTIMETER SETTINGS
LOCAL
DESTINATION
ALTERNATE
RESET ALTIMETER BEFORE APPROACH

FORECASTS (ESTIMATED FLIGHT TIME PLUS 2 HOURS)
ROUTE: I have been adquately briefed on the current WX and forecast WX effecting my flight and I understand the WX situation. (S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.
PILOTS SIGNATURE

CLEARANCE: A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:
ALTERNATE:
WINDS ALOFT GIVEN BY: SIGNATURE AND TITLE OF WEA. OFFICER, AS PILOT REQUESTS: Captain Ky ANG

AAF FORM 23A REQUIRED ☐ NOT REQUIRED ☒ | FORECASTER: VOID 14300 | TIME

FLIGHT PLAN (PILOT COMPLETES) RADIO CALLS	TYPE OF AIRCRAFT	PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY)	POINT OF DEPARTURE
W 3869	V P-51	Mantell	Marietta AIF

1	2	3	4
☐ CFR ☐ IFR	☐ CFR ☐ IFR	☐ CFR ☐ IFR	☐ CFR ☐ IFR
ALT. VFR	ALT	ALT.	ALT.
ROUTE Dect	ROUTE	ROUTE	ROUTE
TO DXI.	TO	TO	TO

AIRPORT OF FIRST INTENDED LANDING	TRUE AIR SPEED	TRANSMITTING FREQUENCIES	RECEIVER ONLY	NO RADIO
DXI.	300	126.1 "B" KC. 8 "A" KC.	☐	☐

PROPOSED TAKE-OFF TIME	EST. TIME EN ROUTE	ALTERNATE AIRPORT	HOURS OF FUEL (CRUISING)	INSTRUMENT RATING NONE ☐ TYPE	FLIGHT PRIORITY
1330 C	1 Hr. 10 Min.		3 Plus		

REMARKS: (NOW FIXED WHICH WILL BE REPORTED WHILE ON INSTRUMENT FLIGHT.
MAAF TWR 396.3 and "B" channel

TOWER FREQUENCIES: DESTINATION "B" KC. ALTERNATE KC.
WEATHER CODE RECEIVED ☐ YES ☐ NO
MILEAGE: TO DESTINATION 310 DEST. TO ALTERNATE

PILOT'S SIGNATURE: (S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.
☐ COMMAND PILOT ☐ SENIOR PILOT ☐ CONTRACT PILOT OR CARGO AIRCRAFT ☐ PILOT

FLIGHT CLEARANCE AUTHORIZATION

TRANSMITTED TO	TIME	BY	OPERATIONS IDENTIFICATION
AIS	1420	BC	

FINAL APPROVAL RECEIVED	CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED	CLEARING AUTHORITY
		ROBERT C. PAUL, COL AC, CO

INSTRUCTIONS AND APPROVAL TRANSMITTED TO PILOT OR TOWER BY	ACTUAL TAKE-OFF TIME	CLEARANCE OFFICER
TM	1442Z	

WAR DEPARTMENT
A. A. F. FORM NO. 1A
REV. 1 JAN 44

AIRPLANE FLIGHT REPORT - ENGINEERING

INSPECTION STATUS

	DATE OF OR HOURS DUE	INSPECTED TODAY BY	INSPECTED TODAY STATION
PREFLIGHT	12-23-47	O	Standiford
DAILY	12-23-47	O	
25 HOURS	183:40		
50 HOURS	192:55		Field
100 HOURS	242:55		
Battery	Daily	0/1250	

SERVICING - CONDITION OF TAKE-OFF
(CHECK IMMEDIATELY BEFORE TAKE-OFF)

SERVICE	FUEL (GALLONS) SERVICED	FUEL (GALLONS) IN TANKS	OIL (QUARTS) NO. 1 SERVICED	OIL NO. 1 IN TANKS	OIL NO. 2 SERVICED	OIL NO. 2 IN TANKS	OIL NO. 3 SERVICED	OIL NO. 3 IN TANKS	OIL NO. 4 SERVICED	OIL NO. 4 IN TANKS	RADIATORS CHECKED
1ST	0	209	0	40							
2ND	57	209	0	40							
3RD											
4TH											
5TH											

INSPECTION OF AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT	SYMBOL	INSPECTED BY	STATION
BOMBARDMENT			
GUNNERY			
CHEMICAL			
COMMUNICATIONS	M	Marks	Standiford Fld.
PHOTOGRAPHIC			
NAVIGATION			

STATUS TODAY: 1 — 0; 2; 3; 4

EXPLANATION:

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: 1 ____ 3 ____ 2 ____ 4 ____

REMARKS: PILOTS AND MECHANICS — SEE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE FRONT COVER.

Preflight & Daily OK O'Bryan

1 J.L. Carwell 1st. Lt.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

Richard L. Tyler

RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain Ky. ANG

2 Service by OBryan

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			
CLEAN. DUE	183:40			

P-51	HOURS TO DATE	183:40
AIRCRAFT	HOURS TODAY	1:10
869	TOTAL	184:50

DATE	AIRCRAFT ORG. DATA	AIRCRAFT DATA	ENGINE DATA	
12-23-47	AIR FORCE: 11th	COMPONENT:	ENGINE MODEL: V-1650-7	
STATION: Standiford Fld.	COMD., SERV. COMD., OR DEPT: Ky. ANG	Fighter	SERIAL NO.: V-328630	SERIAL NO.
CREW CHIEF OR ENGINEER: O'Bryan	GROUP NO. & TYPE: 123rd. Ftr. Gp.	AIRCRAFT MODEL: P-51D-20-NA	SERIAL NO.	SERIAL NO.
	SQUADRON NO. & TYPE: 165th Ftr. Sqd.	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO.: 44-63869	TOTAL FLIGHT TIME →	1:10

WD AAF FORM NO. 1
Revised (1 October 1945)

AIRCRAFT FLIGHT REPORT — OPERATIONS

DATE	AIR FORCE OR COMMAND	BASE UNIT OR GROUP NO. & TYPE	SQUADRON NO. & TYPE	STATION
1-7-48	11th	123rd Fighter Gp. (NG)	165th Fighter Sqd	Standiford Field

ENGINEER OR MECHANIC IN CHARGE - NAME AND GRADE	AIRCRAFT TYPE, MODEL, SERIES	AIRCRAFT SERIAL NO.
JOHN L. O'BRYAN S/SGT	P-51M	44-63869

PRINT PLAINLY 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 - ENTER TIME FLOWN ON LINE THEREUNDER										FLIGHT DATA		TIME
		DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.	DUTY	FLT. COND.			
MANTELL, THOMAS F. JR. CAPT. KY ANG 0-806873												TO DXL		1520
												FROM DMY		1340
												MISSION T-18F	NO. OF LANDINGS *	1:40
* Aircraft crashed at Franklin, Ky at 1518 CST 7 January 1948												TO		
		Original Form lost in crash										FROM		
A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:		Pilot's watch stopped at 1516 CST establishing time of crash										MISSION	NO. OF LANDINGS	
Richard L. Tyler RICHARD L. TYLER Captain Ky ANG												TO		
												FROM		
												MISSION	NO. OF LANDINGS	
												TO		
												FROM		
												MISSION	NO. OF LANDINGS	
												TO		
												FROM		
												MISSION	NO. OF LANDINGS	
Lt C. H4	ENTER TOTAL FLIGHT TIME ON REVERSE SIDE											SUB-TOTAL FORWARDED	NO. OF LANDINGS *	1:40

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

16 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 checksd & 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. Detrola 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.

Lieb -13-

-19-

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 4 00 feet.

3. Upon arrival of our C-47 at Standiford at 1515 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 1710 CST a phone call was received by Major Hyle 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 one mechanic, and administration Specialist, and a co-pilot aboard. 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 on a search of the investigation that was possible at night. We took affidavits from Mrs. Hillis.

123280

accident, Major.

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 affadavits concerning the accident.

6. 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 hurray 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 spirled at high power setting and finally took a heading of about 220 degrees and was climbing about 180 M.P.H. 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 that he could a throat mixer. 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 as 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 1605 CST, climbing to and the Franklin, Ky. 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.

1233300

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 agressive 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 torque. 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 fartherest 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, parell to the ground. The plane did not burn upon impact. The pilots watch shattered at 1518 CST.

8. Captain Mantell was graduated from a single Engine school, AT-6...he was out in a Pro 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 this time he flew transition in P-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, 1946. His terminal leave was up about Jan. 20, 1947...the 21st day of March Capt. Mantell started in business, he part owner of a Flying 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 P-51 about May of 1947 and built his time to around [illegible] hours up until his death. He was a flight leader. His military time was approximately 2700 hours, his civilian time was around 700 hours.

-9-

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 P-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 something 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, weighted 190 lbs. A husky, well-build man.

RICHARD D. RUDLOW,
Captain, USAF, ANG,
Operations Officer &
Investigator of the
Accident.

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

A/hmg

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."

123 330

-1-

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.

[illegible] flight of four P-40s were taken from Marietta Army Airport, Marietta, Georgia. Each pilot started his engine [illegible] Capt. Mantell who was to lead the flight, contacted the tower and obtained take-off instructions and the flight was [illegible] by Capt. Mantell. He [illegible] his wingmen to [illegible] second element with Lt. Hammond [illegible] The first two minutes of the [illegible] above 1500' followed by two [illegible] Capt. Mantell [illegible] in regular formation [illegible] The flight proceeded on course towards Louisville, [illegible] to 5000' and leveling off at this altitude, Capt. Mantell signalled for a change-over to #2 B-[illegible] channels.

The flight proceeded without incident until over the Bals Mallow Reservoir at which point Capt. Mantell signaled the [illegible] 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 climbed off to the right making contact with the O.R. Managing North of Godman Field. At this point 1Lt. Hendricks, #2 man, broke away from the formation and headed toward Standiford Field. Capt. Mantell immediately after this began a rather steep spiralling 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 210°, still climbing at the maximum rate of 180 MPH. 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 18000' 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 using which 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 out ETA 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 hear 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".

123[illegible]

-13

and from [illegible] living in this area I recognize 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 it is out there at 12:0 o'clock," and I was able to discern a bright appearing object, very small, and so tiny as to be unable to identify it as to size, shape, color, but it was definitely something which could be seen. It's position was slightly lower and to the left of the sun. This was at approximately 1:45. I called Capt. Mantell and told him I could see the object and suggested that since we did not seem to be making any progress 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 dro[illegible] down.

From the time that the flight started from about 18000' Capt. Mantell did not seem to decrease the throttle handling to correspond with this and began pulling away from us at 14000', on up even though I was using those maximum power settings. At about 12500', realizing that it was too high to maintain without oxygen, I broke off the flight 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. Seaman was steadily complaining that he was having trouble because of the 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 steep descent toward the course to Standiford Field, about 40°, and finally established contact with Godman tower giving them a position report and our destination, requesting them if they could try to contact Capt. Mantell and inform him that we were returning, in as much as he failed to acknowledge our previous message.

The last contact by radio which we had with Capt. Mantell was when he radioed he could see the object at 1:50 o'clock which was from what we estimated to have the airplane under perfect control and still climbing towards the object. I relayed my thoughts to Godman tower after what we had seen and proceeded with [illegible] my way to Standiford Field, landing at about 2:15 [illegible] and it was now, 1540, as near as I can recall, the last time we saw Capt. Mantell was approximately 2020. At no time did I observe Capt. Mantell to be in trouble and during the later stages of the flight, prior to our breaking off of formation, did I realize that the object was making any great rate of climbing or changing any direction. By the time that I switched to F Band channel, after we started climbing, we were apparently out of range of the Godman tower. In conjunction with the [illegible] we left Capt. Mantell I would judge our position to be about 40 miles northwest of Bowling Green.

Albert W. Clements.

I, Glenn Talbert of Route 3, Simpson County, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky do state that on January 1, 19[illegible] at approximately three-fifteen P.M. I heard an airplane overhead making a funny noise as if motors were [illegible] drum and pulling up, but I thought, it was just [illegible]. Then about three circles the airplane started into a power dive slowly rotating. The plane was so high I couldn't clearly see it when it started down. It started to make a terrific noise, after increasing speed it descended. It exploded half way between Franklin and the [illegible] Line and the [illegible]. Fire was seen. The plane crashed at three-twenty P.M. Central. It didn't explode when it hit the ground but did burn.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 7th day of January 19[illegible].

/s/ William E. Hegwa
Route #3, Lake Spring Road
Franklin, Kentucky

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 7th day of January 19[illegible].

/s/ Richard L. Tyler
Captain, AC
Summary Court Officer

A TRUE COPY:

Richard L. Tyler
RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain, AC

T-235000

-137-

AFFIDAVIT

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

I, Mrs. Carry 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 #2, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

/s/ Mrs. Carry A. Phillips

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

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

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain, AUS

AFFIDAVIT

123.008
-16-

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.

/s/ William C. 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, AUS
Summary Court-Officer

A TRUE COPY:

Richard L. Tyler
RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain, AUS

AFFIDAVIT

8 January 1945
Franklin, Kentucky

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

/s/ William J. Phillips

Witness: /s/ Douglas J. Odell

1130 Oakland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

Witness: /s/ Richard L. Tyler

Franklin Bureau, Louisville, Kentucky

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO

Before me this 8th day of January 1945

/s/ [illegible]

Notary Public

My commission expires [illegible]

-78-

WAR DEPARTMENT
AAF FORM NO. 23
REVISED AUG. 15, 1943

ARMY AIR FORCES

AIRCRAFT CLEARANCE

A OPERATIONS OFFICE

ADDRESS: BUTTA ARMY AIR FIELD
ANNETTA, GEORGIA

DATE: 7 Jan 1943

B PILOT'S NAME	RANK	HOME STATION	ORGANIZATION	AIRCRAFT NUMBER
T.F. Mantell Jr. 0-806873	Capt	DXL	Hqtr Ftr Sq.	41-6366

NAME, INITIALS, RANK, HOME STATION OF OTHER OCCUPANTS	
R.L. Bendrickx 1st. Lt. 0-2063831 DXL	73336
L.W. Clements 1st. Lt. 0-732166 DXL	73800
E.L. Eastwood 2nd. Lt. 0-2085976 DXL	73737

I certify that the weight and balance on this aircraft is identical with that shown on Form "F" filed at DXL.

Pilots Int.

This aircraft is equipped with instruments and flishlight for IFR and Night Flights

Pilots Initials

LIST ADDITIONAL PASSENGERS ON SEPARATE SHEET

C WEATHER DATA — EXISTING LOCAL

EXISTING ROUTE

DESTINATION (LATEST) — TIME

ALTERNATE (LATEST) — TIME

FORECASTS — (ESTIMATED FLIGHT TIME PLUS 2 HOURS)

ROUTE

DESTINATION

ALTERNATE

WINDS ALOFT GIVE ALT. DIR. VEL. AS PILOT REQUESTS

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
Edwin L. Eastwood
EDWIN L. WOOD
Capt., USAF
Operations Officer

ALTIMETER SETTINGS
LOCAL
DESTINATION
ALTERNATE
RESET ALTIMETER BEFORE APPROACH

I have been adequately briefed on the current weather affecting my flight and I understand the existing situation.

(S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.
PILOT'S SIGNATURE

AAF FORM 33A REQUIRED ☐ NOT REQUIRED ☒ FORECASTER — VOID — TIME

FLIGHT PLAN (PILOT COMPLETES) — RADIO CALLS: 4 — TYPE OF AIRCRAFT: P51 — PILOT (LAST NAME ONLY): Mantell — POINT OF DEPARTURE: AKRON A

1 VFR ☐ CPR ☐ IFR — ALT: Direct — ROUTE: DXL — TO:
2 ☐ CPR ☐ IFR — ALT: — ROUTE: — TO:
3 ☐ CPR ☐ IFR — ALT: — ROUTE: — TO:
4 ☐ CPR ☐ IFR — ALT: — ROUTE: — TO:

AIRPORT OF FIRST INTENDED LANDING: DXL — TRUE AIR SPEED: 300 — TRANSMITTING FREQUENCIES: 126.18 "B" "A" — KC KC — RECEIVING ☐ — NO RADIO ☐

PROPOSED TAKE-OFF TIME: 1330 C — EST. TIME ENROUTE: 1 Hr. 10 Min. — ALTERNATE AIRPORT: — NO. HRS. OF FUEL: 5 Plus — INSTRUMENT RATING: NONE ☐ — "A" — FLIGHT PROFICIENCY: 3-C

REMARKS: SHOW FIXES WHICH WILL BE REPORTED WHILE ON INSTRUMENT FLIGHT.

PILOT'S SIGNATURE: (S) Thomas F. Mantell Jr.

ROUTE: AAP T R 395 MLG and "L" Channel — ALTERNATE: — DESTINATION: DXL — RECEIVED ☐ YES ☐ NO — DEPT TO ALTERNATE ☐ COMMAND PILOT ☐ SENIOR PILOT ☐ CONTRACT PILOT OR CARGO AIRCRAFT ☐ PILOT

FLIGHT CLEARANCE AUTHORIZATION

CLEARANCE FOR: AFS — 1120 — "C"

CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED:

OPERATIONS IDENTIFICATION NO.: AFS/AS

ROUTE: Grand Jct., Col AFS, CO.

INSTRUCTIONS AND APPROVAL TRANSMITTED TO PILOT OR TOWER BY: R — ACTUAL TAKE-OFF TIME: 1112 Z

CLEARANCE EXPIRED

Transmittal of 3 AF Form 14.

201

[redacted] (22 Jan 48) 3rd Ind.

HQ, AIR DEFENSE COMMAND, LITTLE ROCK AIR FORCE BASE, N.Y.

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

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

1. The findings of the Aircraft Accident Investigating Board are concurred in by the undersigned.

2. It is desired that this report be brought to the attention of all pilots under the jurisdiction of this command.

R. L. Ramsay

12 Incls

CSUGB 4th Ind.

Hq., Dept. of the Army, SS; USA, National Guard Bureau, Washington 25, D. C. 11 Mar 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 Investigation Board and action taken by the Senior Air Instructor.

FOR THE CHIEF, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU:

H. A. ROBERTSON
Colonel, AGD
Chief, Aviation Group
National Guard Bureau

-3-

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

1st Ind. RLM: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,
Brigadier General, Ky.N.G.,
The Adjutant General.

12 Incls:
n/c

Off of Senior Air Instr, Ky ANG to Adjutant General, Commonwealth of Ky, dtd Jan 45
Subject: Transmittal of AF Form 14.

2nd
3rd Ind.

HEADQUARTERS, Harrisburg, Pa.

TO: Commanding General, Air Defense Command, [illegible]

Recommendations of the Air Board concur in [illegible] and are approved.

By command of [illegible]:

[illegible]

42-1, 7-1

OFFICE OF [illegible]
Kentucky Air National Guard
Standiford Field
P. O. Box 88, Camp Taylor Branch
Louisville 12, Kentucky

22 January 1942

SUBJECT: Transmittal of AC AF Form 14

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

1. Transmitted herewith in accordance with AG Air Memorandum 62-4, dated 11 August 1941, is AC AF Form 14 and allied papers pertaining to aircraft accident 7 January 1942 involving P-39D type aircraft, serial number 44-6366, the aircraft piloted by Captain Thomas F. Mantell Jr. ASN 0-806673, 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. AC AF Form 23
3. AC AF Form 14
4. AC AF 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. 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

1235003

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 - 1614:50, 23 December 1947, EST 9:35 to time of crash
Date last overhaul - new

ENGINES

Model - V-1650-7
Number - V-328830
Total hours - 1714:25
Hours since last overhaul - new

PROPELLER

Model - Hamilton Hydromatic
Hours since last overhaul - new

7. PILOT, HOME STATION AND ORGANIZATION: Thomas F. Mantell Jr., Captain, O-306072, 123rd Fighter Group, 165th Fighter Squadron, Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky

8. PILOT HISTORY:

	1st Pilot	Other
Total hours	1608:00	599:00
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

1235E30

9. COPILOT, HISTORY: Not applicable

10. FLIGHT ENGINEER AND NAVIGATOR NAMES, HOME STATION, ORGANIZATION AND HISTO

Not applicable

RESTRICTED

[redacted]

1235099

-39-

RESTRICTED R+C

8 January 1948

P-51 No. 44-63369

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 on 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 27th December 1947, service was accomplished this date.

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

No mechanical trouble was reported on any of the aircraft.

s/Leonard M. Davey
Major, AC (MC)

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

s/Robert D. Graham
Major, USAF

AFFIDAVIT

January 1948
5 miles southeast of
Franklin, Kentucky on
U. S. #31W(Dixie) Hwy.

[redacted] was sitting in my front room when I heard one explosion, ran to my front window and saw an airplane crash into my backyard, 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, Lick Skillet Road, Franklin, Kentucky this 7th day of January 1948.

[redacted]

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

s/Richard L. Miller
RICHARD L. MILLER
Captain AC AUS
Summary Court Officer

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

s/Richard L. Miller
RICHARD L. MILLER
Captain AC AUS

ARCHIVED

AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1943
Franklin, Kentucky

I, [redacted] of Route #3, Simpson County, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky do state that on 7 January 1943 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 wrecking. 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 1943.

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

Sworn to and subscribed before me
this 7th day of January 1943.

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

A TRUE COPY:

s/Richard L. Tyler
RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain, AC

46

ENCLOSURE #

HEADQUARTERS, 123RD FIGHTER GROUP (AAG)
STANDIFORD, FIELD
P.O. Box 1167
Louisville, Kentucky

A flight of four P-51's departed Marietta, Georgia at 1312 C direct to Standiford Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Captain Thomas Kantell 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 Kantell was talking so I went over to channel B.

The only part of the conversation between Captain Kantell 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 Kantell 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 Kantell, I left the flight at approximately 1440 C and landed at Standiford at 1501 C.

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

s/Robert K. Hendricks
ROBERT K. HENDRICKS
1st Lt. Air Force

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

[signature]
Major, USAF

12 Dec 00

I. xx ( )Non-AT ( )C Instm ( )MAT (x)Ats ( )Dl ( )Pilot Not Read

II. Orig Flight Plan: NG 3869 4 P-51 Mantell DMT VFR DIR

Acft No. Type Acft. Pilot Int Dptr Alt Route

DLT 300 A-B P 1420 110/ 300/ 3-2

Destn A/S Eqpt Dpt Time ETI Hrs Fuel Ck Altn(s)

Crew: Pilot 1st Pilot DMT Ext Date of Insp Card Pilot's Home Sta DXL

Add A/C 3330, 3737, 3800

III. Pln Rte: (Beg Rcd From)

Legs:

ETE: MSN: F/B: Altn(s)

IV. Clnc Time Rte: 1320

(X) I certify that I have adequately briefed the pilot on current and forecast weather for this flight.

( ) I certify that the weather information for this flight has been relayed to the pilot on his "Change Enroute."

This flight should be conducted (VFR) (IFR) from DMT to DXL

(VFR) (IFR) from to

/s/ WB A. R. Vinin, Capt, AC

Forecaster

V. Dpt Acft 3869

(X) Approved ( ) Disapproved ( ) Acknowledged (Grp) Div to ( )

(X) Pilot Read DMT to DXL Altr(s) RB

1420

/s/ H. L. Johnson

1st Lt, USAFR

...LLANT SERVICE Command
Maxwell Fld, Montgomery, Alabama
Operation Location 1)-6

Date 8 January 1948

SUBJECT: Report of Aircraft Accident

TO: Field Office of the Air Inspector, Langley Field, Va.
ATTN: Flying Safety Division
Commanding Officer, Flight Service, Washington 25, D.C.
Commanding Officer, 404th Wg Gp, Mat ATB
Warner Robins, Georgia

1. Flight Plan: AC 3869, 4 P-51's, Nantell, Marietta, Ga. VFR to Standiford Fld, Louisville, Ky, airspeed 300 mph, VHF Channels A and B, departed 1420, 7 January 1948, one hr. 10 min enroute, 3 hrs fuel aboard, pilot rating 3-2. Additional identy AC 3335, 3600 and 3737.

2. Date, time and scene of accident: 7 January 1948, approximately 1650, 4.5 miles south of Franklin, Ky. 86°35' W, 36°40' N.

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

4. ATC Clearance: (Yes) (No)

5. Flight advisory received: (Yes) (No) If "Yes" attach copy. If "No" Explain why. No advisory desired necessary as there were no known hazards to the flight.

6. Position Reported: 30 Miles SW of Standiford Fld, Louisville, Ky at 1500

7. Weather Briefing: (See enclosure)

8. Narrative summary of circumstances: See attached sheet.

3 Incl.
1. AAF Form 23
2. Pertinent Weather
3. Narrative Summary

[illegible]
Major, USAF
Commanding

AFFIDAVIT

January 7, 1948
Franklin, Kentucky

I, William O. Mayes of Route #3, Lake Spring Road, Franklin, Kentucky, Simpson County do state that on 7 January 1948 at approximately thirteen 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.

s/William O. Mayes
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 AGD
Summary Court Officer

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

s/Richard L. Tyler
RICHARD L. TYLER
Captain AGD

AFFIDAVIT

7 January 1948
Franklin, Kentucky

I, [redacted] Simpson County, Franklin, Kentucky, upon viewing the dead body of Captain Thomas F. Kantell Jr. do state that the shattered watch of Captain Kantell stopped at 3:18 P.M. Central, which I fix as the time of death of Captain Kantell.

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

[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 ANG
Summary Court Officer.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

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

ATTACHMENT

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 F. Mantell Jr., Kentucky Air National Guard when it crashed in my field one mile and fifty yards to the left of my home.

[redacted]

WITNESS: I s/Douglas J. McCall
1050 Rowland Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky

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

A TRUE COPY

s/Robert M. Rankin
Captain, USAF

The aforegoing 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 1943

Item 7. Pertinent Weather

Bolling Green, Ky., 7 January 1943

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 1943

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.

[illegible]

8 January 1948

3. Narrative Summary of Additional Information: A Flight of 4 P-51's was enroute from Marietta, Georgia, IFR to Standiford Field, Louisville, Ky, when approximately 30 minutes SW of Standiford Field, at 1450C, Godman Tower called aircraft and requested that they investigate unindentified object visible in sky in vicinity of Godman Field, Ft. Knox, Ky. NG 3336 landed at Standiford Field, and NG 3869, 3737, and 3800 began climbing. Upon reaching 22,000' NG 3737, and 3800 descended, but NG 3869 continued climbing.

At 1645C, 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 N of Highway 31W, 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 AFIS suggested that an Air Force Officer aid in the investigation and requested Godman Field to do so.

-30-

file

near the area in which he stood was burned.

Captain Mantell

7 January 1948

An official kind of inquiry, which we term a study of the crash reported that Mantell, on a 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 consideration was given to the object being the planet Venus, because all the lines and bearings were by observers generally agree with the bearings and elevation of the body at the time, official files

declare that it was later determined that a large Navy "Sky Hook" balloon was released from a location in Southern Ohio. This was a classified project, and the existence of the large balloons were known only to few. A conflict for that day indicated that the balloon would have passed

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 eventuallythe 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 MYSTERY OF
7 January 1948

On 7 January 1948, at 1320 (1:[illegible] P.M.) [illegible], the tower over at Godman Field, Kentucky sighted a [illegible] flat shaped object which they were unable to identify. [illegible] of this object was brought to the attention of the [illegible] Operations Officer, Lt. [illegible] Base Command, but the Intelligence Officer, and eventually [illegible] object remained unidentified. At 1[illegible] (2:45 P.M.), 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 [illegible], radioed back that he was on a routine mission, but would investigate. Captain [illegible] then started a spiralling climb to 15,000 feet, then continued [illegible] on a [illegible] the approximate direction of the [illegible] feet the wing man turned back [illegible] outfitted for flights requiring [illegible] to combat Captain Mantell [illegible] Mantell made a transmission [illegible] and the object in sight, [illegible] The 15,000 foot transmission [illegible] until the next day, [illegible] still containing [illegible]

It is the ATIC opi[illegible] oxygen starvation [illegible] until increasing [illegible] level out. [illegible] and as the [illegible] light divi[illegible] speed [illegible] Captain [illegible] by the [illegible] disco[illegible] very [illegible] that [illegible] curios[illegible] rocket[illegible]

Even [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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 Chio. 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 directed to close on this balloon which was still more than 4C [illegible] above him.

It is the Air Force conclusion that it is possible 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 a balloon, and this object was probably the Navy balloon. The witness described the object as pear shaped and metallic.

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:
   #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.

[redacted]

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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°, by observers at Godman Field; 1955 EST, west southwest, by those at Lockbourne Air Base; and 1955-2000 EST, about 210°, 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. Those 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,

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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 20 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 flaming 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, 1948, at these widely separated localities, was the planet Venus. To assume that a terrestrial object could be located so nigh 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

[redacted]

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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 positon 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. Orner)	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

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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 8 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

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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 30 -- 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 that the time of Lieutenant Mantell's death he was actually trying to reach Venus is

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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 coincidence. 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 chanced 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

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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 ATIC DATE COMMENT NO. 1
Attn: Maj Fournet

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.

~~3. It is requested that appropriate action be taken to release this information.~~

for Wm Rice, 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 Unc in accordance with paragraph 29b, AFR205-1.

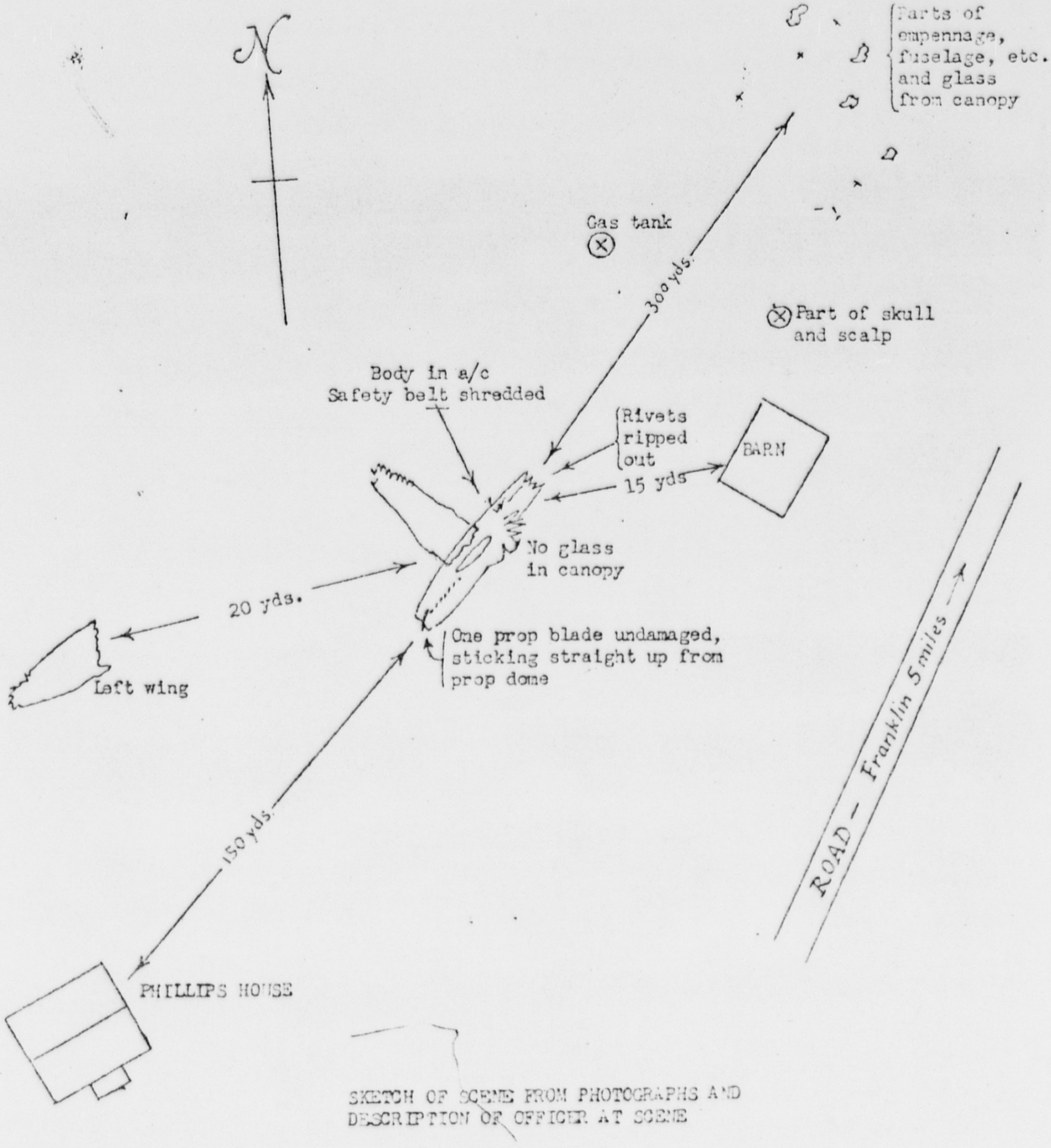
I and Lt Hurt "Blue Book" officers were launched from Clinton County Airport in Southern Ohio after the 1st reports were received. It will be well into the night before the Dayton area.

SECURITY INFORMATION

[redacted]

Flegal

[redacted]



SKETCH OF SCENE FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESCRIPTION OF OFFICER AT SCENE