

ATIC NO. \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF INFO 17 March 1950

AF NO. \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION Kirtland AFB, N.M.

REPORT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

SOURCE USAF Personnel

DATE OF REPORT 21 Mar 50

DATE IN TO ATIC \_\_\_\_\_

TIME OF SIGHTING 1500

COLOR Silver and dark

SHAPE \_\_\_\_\_

SPEED \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated

SIZE Varied estimates

ALTITUDE 10,000'-12,000' Measured

COURSE N and NE

LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED \_\_\_\_\_

NO. IN GROUP 3

TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground

SOUND \_\_\_\_\_

MANEUVERS Tumbling motion ascending and descending.

PHOTOS \_\_\_\_\_ SKETCHES \_\_\_\_\_

Temporary ATIC Form 329  
(2 Jan 52)

*Brown*

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*Plastic UFOs and the "Stack of Coins"*

A burst balloon has caused many a saucer scare, but the invasion of Farmington, New Mexico, on Saint Patrick's Day 1950 was one of the most dramatic. The "saucers" began to fly about 10:15 A.M. M.S.T., and soon filled the air. In numbers estimated from 500 to thousands, for the next hour the gleaming saucer-shaped objects soared over the town, moving erratically at incredible speeds, darting in and out among each other in what one writer has called "the greatest exhibition of magnetic flight that has ever happened in this universe." [6] (See *Chapter ix.*)

The explanation is more prosaic. A Skyhook balloon had been launched that morning from Holloman Air Force Base near White Sands, New Mexico. Near Farmington, in the cold atmosphere at 60,000 feet the balloon had become brittle, burst, and disintegrated into hundreds of tiny pieces of plastic. Light as feathers, shining in the sunlight, they floated over the town and away [1, p. 106].

7-3712-58

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------|--|
| COUNTRY<br>UNITED STATES                                                     |                                      | REPORT NO.<br>a/164178-1                       | (LEAVE BLANK) |  |
| SUBJECT<br>Unidentified Flying Objects                                       |                                      |                                                |               |  |
| AREA REPORTED ON<br>Albuquerque                                              |                                      | FROM (Agency)<br>Headquarters Eighth Air Force |               |  |
| DATE OF REPORT<br>21 March 1950                                              | DATE OF INFORMATION<br>17 March 1950 | EVALUATION<br>A-1                              |               |  |
| PREPARED BY (Officer)<br>CARL C. MACHEMER, Capt., USAF                       |                                      | SOURCE<br>Eighth Air Force Personnel           |               |  |
| REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable) |                                      |                                                |               |  |

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclosures at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 112-Part II.)

1. On 17 March at 1500 hours from the ramp in front of the Operations building at Kirtland AFB, an officer and three enlisted men observed three objects at an altitude of between ten and twelve thousand feet. At first glance the observers thought they were parachutes. This was ruled out because of a tumbling motion exposing silver and dark side alternately, leading the observers to believe them to be wing tanks from fighters in the area. This was ruled out when suddenly one object rose vertically at a high rate of speed disappearing into the scattered cumulus clouds over the field, the other two objects seemed to be descending, one toward the North, the other Northeast. The object descending toward the Northeast was observed for a period of 15 minutes disappearing into the mountains approximately 20 miles away.

2. Weather: Clear with scattered cumulus at 15,000 feet; visibility unlimited.

3. Wind: Calm.

4. No report was turned in to personnel at Kirtland AFB as the incident was not considered important until reporting personnel read of other reports of Unidentified Flying objects in same area.

5. Pictures: None.

6. Size:

- a. Capt. Chenchar: Size of C-54.
- b. T/Sgt. Miller: Size of desk.
- c. T/Sgt. Key: Size of fighter aircraft.
- d. T/Sgt. Neumann: No estimate.

7. Shape: All observers, non descript.

8. Report indicates definite objects, unidentifiable to the observers, were in area. Information as to the type of weather forecasting activities, special projects etc., is necessary before report can be properly analyzed.

APPROVED:

DOWNGRADED AT 2 YEAR INTERVAL  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEAR  
DOD DIR 5200.10

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Directorate of Intelligence, USAF (trip)

Lt. Colonel, USAF  
Director of Intelligence  
Headquarters Eighth Air Force

## AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

|                                     |            |             |       |
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|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------|

1. On 17 March 1950 at 1400 hours an officer and three enlisted men from this command while on an administration trip made the following observations from the ramp in front of the base operations building at Kirtland AFB:

a. Captain Paul WMI Thacher, Headquarters Eighth Air Force. "I was watching aircraft flying in the pattern when suddenly my attention was drawn to three objects at about ten to twelve thousand feet which at first glance appeared to be parachutes. I called the attention of the three enlisted men to them. As we observed them I decided they were not parachutes but because of a tumbling and rotating motion exhibiting alternately silver and dark sides that they were probably wing tanks or pylons from fighters. I discarded this idea when one of the objects suddenly arose vertically at high speed disappearing into the scattered cirrus clouds at 15,000 feet over the field. The other two objects which seemed to be carried at wind speed 50/50 miles per hour separated, one traveled North while the other traveled Northeast. I fixed my attention on the one going Northeast and watched it until it seemed to disappear behind the mountains approximately 20 miles away. I would estimate the size of the objects to be approximately that of a B-50 aircraft. I cannot describe the shape but can definitely state that the objects were not parachutes, balloons or reflectors used on weather balloons.

The weather was CAUV except for scattered cirrus at 15,000 feet. The surface winds were calm."

b. T/Sgt. Lawrence E. Miller, Headquarters Eighth Air Force. "My observations were substantially the same as those of Capt. Thacher except that the objects appeared to me to be about the size and shape of a desk, metallic in nature and moved about 100 mph."

c. T/Sgt. Alvin E. Naumann, 12nd Post Sq., 11th Post Group. "I have nothing to add except that the rapid rate at which the one object ascended was considerably faster than would have been possible if air currents were the motivating force."

d. T/Sgt. James E. Key, Headquarters Eighth Air Force. "The objects appeared to me to be about the size of fighter aircraft; as a matter of fact I first thought they were aircraft dog fighting in a tight spinning maneuver. When the one object arose vertically at high speed I realized that they were not fighters. I'd estimate their speed laterally at about 300 mph."

#### 2. Comments of preparing officers:

a. The personnel submitting the observation are all given of considerable experience and their reliability is beyond question.

b. There is no question but that three unidentified objects were sighted by the observers. Further, the observers stated that they were familiar with the radar reflectors used on some types of weather balloons and were sure that the objects were not of this type. Further information regarding activities in this area at this time and on this date would be necessary to analyze this observation.

of Approving Officer:

Signature of Approving Officer:

CARL C. BARNETT

Captain, USAF

Chief, Operational Intelligence

Directorate of Intelligence

Headquarters Eighth Air Force