

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 19 Nov 61	2. LOCATION Mackinaw, Illinois		12. CONCLUSIONS ☐ Was Balloon ☐ Probably Balloon ☐ Possibly Balloon ☒ Was Aircraft ☐ Probably Aircraft ☐ Possibly Aircraft ☐ Was Astronomical ☐ Probably Astronomical ☐ Possibly Astronomical ☒ Other <u>Panda Bear refueling</u> ☐ Insufficient Data for Evaluation ☐ Unknown
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local _____ GMT _____	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION ☒ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar ☐ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar		
5. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	6. SOURCE Civilian		
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 3-4 min.	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS	9. COURSE Generally E	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING 2 men plowing field at night noticed bright light in SW. They stopped tractors to watch light and observed it to break into numerous other lights. These lights faded in and out with no apparent pattern. Cluster of lights moved from AS 230° elevation 25° in a straight line to and elevation of 20° in the E. Lights just faded out of sight in distance. Duration 3-4 min.		11. COMMENTS It is concluded that sighting resulted when a refueling mission occurred in Panda Bear refueling sector. Pattern of lights described by witnesses was probably those of tanker. Direction of Panda Bear sector parallels that of course taken by UFO. Is no evidence available which indicates objects seen are interplanetary space vehicles or that they constitute threat to security of US.	

I had both men trace out the apparent path and the path crossed the meridian at an elevation of about 30°. The path did not come anywhere near the zenith, as was originally indicated. The lights apparently began their motion at the instant that the numerous lights appeared. The lights preserved their particular pattern and moved across the sky as a small, compact cluster that could easily have been covered by the thumbnail held at arms length. Appenzeller thought ~~they~~ that he may have seen the light on the previous turn around the field, but he was not sure. Both men insisted that the ~~the~~ bright light was there and stationary at least three or four ~~minutes~~ minutes before it was seen to break up into smaller lights. The breakup apparently was not explosive as indicated earlier but they appeared in a ~~rapid~~ rather sudden fashion. I asked the men ~~to~~ to think calmly about how long it took the cluster of lights to ^{move} across the sky to the disappearance point. (The lights just faded out in the distance), and to write it down independently on slips of paper that I had provided them with. When I opened the papers the results of the ballot was 3 minutes and 4 minutes. Both men, incidentally, confirmed the fact the cluster of lights was trailed by an "itty bitty" light that differed from the others in ~~the~~ hue, apparently being more reddish, and which emitted sparks. Questioned about the sparks, ~~he~~ said that there was just an occasional spark from the light, perhaps about 12 in all during the interval...

The gentlemen agreed thoroughly on the noise and no amount of coming back to the subject or attempting to trick them would shake them from the fact that the noise real and very easily audible after the tractors had been shut off. ~~He~~, who had served with SACB as an engine mechanic, knows his planes and prided himself during his Air Force term of duty that he could recognize various types of planes at considerable distances by the sound of their motors. ~~He~~ did not concentrate on the lights but on the sound and was attempting to turn over in his mind during the entire ~~episode~~ episode what type of engine it might be. He could ~~identify~~ identify no single engine. The noise resembled that of a diesel, of a pulsating jet, and of the rumble of thunder; he said a sound effects man might have produced it by shaking a large piece of tin.

The time of this sighting apparently is determined to plus or minus 5 minutes of 11:45 PM on November 20th (incidentally the date of the original report, November 19, is in error), the accuracy being ascribable to the fact that the boys had determined that they would not

work past midnight and had been watching their watches rather closely and were getting ready to call it a night. After the apparition the boys sat around in the field finishing their cigarettes and discussing what they would have done had the thing landed in the field and had they been invited to take a ride!

The next day, in the course of their official duties, they discussed it with their fellow airmen, getting a considerable amount of razzing, the story finally coming to the ears of Capt. Pilon. He had the men report this then through official channels. He personally was at first tempted to dismiss the whole thing but ~~but~~ felt that it was safer to have the thing on record and officially recorded lest something should come of it later. (Good by). On that very day, November 21, the ~~chap~~ chap, ~~said~~ said that he had been lying in bed the previous night about that time and heard what he thought at first was a diesel train coming up the rarely-used spur track that passes about 1/8 of a mile from his home. Both he and his wife apparently heard the noise, which puzzled ^{them} ~~him~~, because the train never seemed to arrive at the house and to pass by as is the wont of trains that travel on tracks that pass by people's houses. He did not get out of bed to investigate (serious lack of scientific curiosity). Also on November 21, another farmer who had been helping ~~one~~ ~~one~~, had taken his very fancy tractor to ~~farm~~ farm during the course of which procedure, it broke down. When the three ~~were~~ were hovering over the tractor in an attempt to find out the trouble, the incident of the previous evening was apparently recalled just briefly, whereupon Dietrich exclaimed something about that he had seen the same thing, before the other two boys were able to go into any details. They did not discuss the matter further because they quickly turned to discussing the mechanical misbehavior of the tractor and to disassemble ~~a~~ a portion thereof. Incidentally, ~~is~~ is located six to eight miles from the field in question. Another piece of incidental intelligence, Capt. ~~is~~ is long-time employee of the Caterpillar Tractor Company and he knows personally the writer of the Alexander Botts stories of Earthworm Tractor fame in the Saturday Evening Post. Upon, I believe the name is, found writing the Alexander Botts stories so profitable that he quit his job at Caterpillar Tractor Company, and became a professional writer.

After we had finished with the inspection of the field, we all called upon Mr. ~~Mr.~~

who lives approximately 3 or 4 miles from the field. On that night of November 20, at some undetermined time, but definitely prior to 11 o'clock, and most probably between 10 and 10:30, [REDACTED] has been coming back from town and as he walked into his farmhouse, he looked up and saw what he took to be a low-flying plane with a row square lights like compartment windows. He associated no noise with the sighting. He walked unhurriedly into the house and called to his wife to ask whether she ~~wanted to~~ cared to see a flying saucer. They both looked out the kitchen window (and I did too later) and saw this object proceeding at a vague clip. [REDACTED] is certainly no observer but he has a disarming honesty about his vagueness; he just didn't know anything other than he had seen some lights, a low-flying ~~air~~ aircraft, and no noise and he wasn't even sure of directions until I had to identify them for him. As close as we can get, the craft was moving from south to north, and disappeared from [REDACTED] view in his northwest quadrant. [REDACTED] is a paragon of negative curiosity and a good 20 minutes questioning yielded only a few crumbs, but well-repeated ~~some~~ crumbs, of basic information.

Bidding good-bye to [REDACTED] and shortly thereafter to H. [REDACTED] and I proceeded back to the headquarters of the Squadron and I thereupon/^{invited} the Captain and Sam to have lunch with me at the airport. After lunch I bid both these gentlemen good-bye and reported in to the ticket desk only to find that my flight had been cancelled and that the next one left some four hours later. I retired to the nursery to sleep. I have now awakened from my nap and this is being dictated in the nursery of the greater Peoria airport. It is yet one and a half hours to flight time.

Suggested solution: During the entire course of interrogation, two things kept coming to mind: One is that the white light originally described tallied so closely with a landing light and, Second, that the close cluster of lights likewise tallied with the sighting of my own about 1950 from the balcony of the Perkins Observatory. There I had turned a ⁵ 3-inch telescope on to the apparition and studied the arrangement of lights quite closely. There were some 8 lights arranged in cluster formation ~~that~~ that somehow reminded me of a small Christmas tree making a stately cruise of the sky. This later turned out to be, after a great deal of questioning and a great many no's and denials that anybody knew anything, turned out to be a KC-97 tanker. A tanker of this sort has, I understand, a large boom light and

during refueling operations every light on the plane is on full blast. At the close of our first morning session, before we repaired to the field, I had pointed out this resemblance to Capt. [REDACTED] and asked whether there were any tanker runs in the area. Capt. [REDACTED] said that KC-97's are on the way out, but that there were two of them based at O'Hare and that conceivably they might have come down this way. [REDACTED] pointed out that he saw no navigation lights and that both this, and the fact that they had seen it stationary for so long, did not jibe with the tanker interpretation.

Nonetheless, when [REDACTED] and I returned to the squadron base after our interview with [REDACTED] had been doing some investigating of his own and had found that there was a tanker run called Panda Bear that operated between Indianapolis, Kansas City, Des Moines and Springfield, and that the shaded portion of the run shown on the map lay squarely over Macinack. It now remains to determine whether on the night of November 20th there ^{had been} indeed a tanker run in progress.

The case as one might reconstruct it on a tanker hypothesis follows: the tanker was making circular runs of very large radius, as I used to observe in the Columbus area, near Lockborne Air Force Base. [REDACTED] may have seen the boom light, which is reported to ^a be/large, ~~and~~ bright, white light on one of his swings around the field. On his next swing around, he may have ~~noted~~ noted the tanker on a straight line run nearly parallel to his line of sight. From the start [REDACTED] stated that he had seen the small light trailing. This would presumably be the jet on the stern chase, closing in for contact with the boom. The breaking up into several lights could very well arise from the fact that although originally resolved they were lost in the glare of the white light until the plane came close enough so ^{apparent} the/ angular separation of the lights was sufficient to allow the lights to be visible despite the ~~and~~ bright, white light. This would give the appearance of their suddenly having come into view. The noise could be explained by being the composite noise of the reciprocating engines of the KC-97 and the noise of the jet motor. Combined, these two sounds would make identification with any one type of aircraft a bit difficult! There is nothing in the remainder of the flight that would run counter to this interpretation other than the salient fact that no navigation lights were noted by [REDACTED] However, assuming that [REDACTED] had seen the same plane an hour or so earlier (it was quite

usual for the Lockborne tanker to circle about for at least an hour) then this can be cleared up also, because [REDACTED] and his wife both felt certain, after rather insistent recall, that there had been colored lights on the plane, on the craft, and ^{that} ~~they~~ they must have been red and green, because if they had been anything else they would have noticed it! If we use this highly unspecific intelligence information for all its ^{is} worth, we can make out a case for the plane having had navigation lights and that either [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were so intent on the unusual formation of the rest of the lights that they failed to notice lights that were normal and which they would not have considered at all unusual, or that the tanker had momentarily flipped out its navigation lights in favor of the other bright lights. From my own experience, I can attest that the tanker lights that I saw were so bright and claimed my attention so much that at present I cannot recall ^{whether} ~~if~~ I also saw navigation lights. It is my best belief that I did not. Indeed, if I had, I would not have remained puzzled as long as I did by the apparition. Likewise, the jet should have had navigation lights and these were not reported.

The suggested solution is therefore by no means airtight, but, as a solution, depends crucially upon whether there was a tanker formation in the area at that time on that night. If so, then we must assume that either the navigational lights were out or went unnoticed.

If this proves to have been a tanker, it will serve as an excellent example of how an unusual but quite natural phenomenon can remain a UFO for a long while, sometimes permanently ^{adequately} ~~unadequately~~ unless ~~immediately~~ investigated as soon as possible.

That is all!!!!

169th Tactical Fighter Squadron (SD)
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
2323 S. Airport Road
Peoria, Illinois

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Intelligence Section

24 Nov 1961

SUBJECT: UFO Report Check List

TO: Personnel Concerned

The following report is submitted in accordance with AFR 200-2, dated 2 Feb 60:

A. Description of The Object(s):

- (1) Shape: BRIGHT LIGHT, CIRCULAR
- (2) Size Compared To Known Object: NICKEL
- (3) Color: YELLOW & WHITE
- (4) Number: ONE, BUT BROKE UP INTO SEVERAL - 12 OR MORE
- (5) Formation If More Than One: AFTER BREAK-UP, ROUGHLY CIRCULAR WITH ONE SMALL LIGHT TRAILING AT SAME SPEED
- (6) Any Discernible Features Or Details? THE LIGHTS FLICKERED IN AN ODD SEQUENCE AND THE TRAILING LIGHT EMITTED SPARKS
- (7) Tail, Trail, Or Exhaust, Including Size Of Same Compared To Size Of Object: SPARKS ONLY FROM TRAILING LIGHT
- (8) Sound, If Heard, Describe Sound: NOT UNLIKE JET SOUND BUT VERY LOW PITCHED AND RUMBLING
- (9) Other Pertinent Or Unusual Features: WHEN FIRST SIGHTED THE OBJECT WAS STATIONARY AND MADE NO SOUND. SOUND STARTED WHEN OBJECT BROKE UP.

B. Description Of Course Of Object(s):

- (1) What First Called The Attention Of Observer(s) To The Object(s)?
OBSERVERS - SSGT [REDACTED] AND A2C [REDACTED] WERE FLOWING A FIELD AT NIGHT NEAR THEIR HOME. PRIOR TO RETURNING HOME [REDACTED] ASKED [REDACTED] WHAT THE BRIGHT OBJECT S.W. OF THEIR POSITION WAS? [REDACTED] THOUGHT IT WAS THE PLANET VENUS, AS THEY DISCUSSED IT THE OBJECT BROKE SUDDENLY INTO A DOZEN OR MORE LIGHTS WHICH MOVED AS A UNIT EASTWARD
- (2) Angle Or Elevation And Azimuth Of Object(s) When First Observed:
APPROX 20,000 FEET AT AN ANGLE OF 40-60 DEG ELEVATION S.W. OF THEIR POSITION
- (3) Angle Or Elevation And Azimuth Of Object(s) Upon Disappearance:
20 DEG ELEVATION E.S.E. OF THEIR POSITION

(4) Discreption Of Flight Path And Maneuvers Of Object(s): STRAIGHT AND LEVEL AT HIGH SPEED

(5) How Did The Object(s) Disappear: STRAIGHT OUT OF VISIBLE RANGE

(6) How Long Was The Object(s) Visible: FOUR TO FIVE MINUTES

C. Manner Of Observation:

(1) How Was The Object(s) Observed: NAKED EYE

(2) Statement As to Optical Aids: NONE

(3) If Sighting Was Made From An Aircraft Note The Following:

a. Type A/C: N/A

b. Identification Number: N/A

c. Altitude: N/A

d. Heading: N/A

e. Speed: N/A

f. Home Station: N/A

D. Time And Date Of Sighting:

(1) Zulu Time/Date Group Of Sighting: 200545Z

(2) Light Conditions: CLEAR SKY, BRIGHT MOON

E. Location Of Observer(s): FOUR MILE E. AND ONE MILE S. OF MACKINAW, ILLINOIS

F. Identifying Information On Observer(s):

(1) Military - Name: [REDACTED]

Grade: SSGT

Organization: 169th TFS

Duty: JET ENGINE MECHANIC

Estimate Of Reliability: VERY GOOD

(2) Military - Name: [REDACTED]

Grade: A2C

Organization: 169th TFS

Duty: JET ENGINE MECHANIC

Estimate Of Reliability: VERY GOOD

G. Weather & Winds-Aloft Conditions At The Time And Place Of Sightings:

(1) Observer(s) Account Of Weather Conditions: CAVU

H. Any Other Unusual Activity Or Condition Meteorological, Astronomical Or Otherwise? NONE

I. Position Titles & Comments Of The Preparing Officer: AS SQN INT OFFICER I INTERVIEWED BOTH OBSERVERS AND THEIR STORIES COINCIDED AND THEY STATE ANOTHER FARMER IN THE AREA MADE THE SAME OBSERVATION I FEEL NEITHER OF THESE MEN HAS REASON TO FABRICATE A STORY.

J. Existence Of Physical Evidence: NONE

Ronald L. Pilon
Preparing Officer's Signature: RONALD L. PILON
Capt, USAF
Air Targets Officer

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O Fort Ritchie
Control Room, offcutt

Drop 155

335-AR ^{at} 2345 Local
in repelling ~~to~~ ~~Nov~~ over Kincinacty
SE Penion
Karker run called Panda Bear

Nothing up on 20th from SAC at 34th ARS
Maj ~~Hudson~~ Command Post

Stg EDGETT ~~Sheet~~ them away

79474 Capt ~~Hudson~~ WAFB Refueling

Indear ^{line} 401 Command post - 79474 Training
Capt Barker Day 261 Barksdale 2AF Refueling

21 0545Z

JOINT MESSAGEFORM				SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		OFFICIAL FILE COPY					
SPACE BELOW RESERVED FOR COMMUNICATION CENTER											
ZNR		13 DEC 61 15 54z		to 13/415 <i>[initials]</i> 41							
PRECEDENCE		TYPE MSG (Check)		ACCOUNTING SYMBOL		ORIG. OR REFERS TO					
ACTION ROUTINE		BOOK MULTI SINGLE		AF		X					
INFO											
FROM: FTD WPAFB O						SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS					
TO: 2ND AF BAR ^K SDALE AFB LA <i>RJEBKF</i> 8TH AF WESTOVER AFB MASS <i>RJEXDHB</i> <i>13-12-196</i> UNCLASSIFIED TD-E REQUEST A CHECK OF ALL REFUELING SQUADRONS' WEEKLY OPERATIONAL RECORDS TO DETERMINE POSSIBLE USE OF PANDA BEAR SECTOR AT 0545Z ON 21 NOV 61. SEND FINAL REPORT TO HQ FTD ATTN TD-E MAJOR FRIEND AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.											
						<i>131512z</i> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">DATE 13</td> <td style="width: 50%;">TIME <i>1012</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MONTH DEC</td> <td>YEAR 1961</td> </tr> </table>		DATE 13	TIME <i>1012</i>	MONTH DEC	YEAR 1961
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WRITER SYMBOL <i>TD-E</i> TYPED NAME AND TITLE <i>[Signature]</i> Major Robert J. Friend PHONE 69216 PAGE NR. 1 NR. OF PAGES 1 SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED				RELEASER SIGNATURE <i>[Signature]</i> TYPED (or stamped) NAME AND TITLE EDWARD H. WYNN Colonel, USAF Dep/Technologies & Subsystems							

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RR RUEDSO

DE RJEBKF 199

22 DEC 61 12 59z

ZNR

R 212200Z

FM 2AF BARKLEDALE AFB LA

TO HQ FTB WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OHIO

BT

UNCLAS BOTS 7979 FOR: FTB, ATTN: TD-E MAJOR FRIEND.

IN REPLY TO YOUR MESSAGE TD-E 13-12-196, 13 DEC 61, REGARDING

POSSIBLE USE OF PANDA BEAR SECTOR AT 2545Z ON 21 NOV 61, A NEGATIVE
REPORT IS SUBMITTED.

BT

21/1221Z DEC RJEBKF

Handwritten notes: A bracket groups the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. To the right of the bracket is the text "E (uFo)". Below the bracket is the text "-X2-a". An arrow points from the left towards the bracketed numbers.

THNN

A REPORT OF THE VISIT TO PEORIA ILLINOIS ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 10, 1961

To Check into the UFO sighting of November 20, 1961.

in question

The sighting/was reported ~~through~~ to the Aerial Phenomenon Division by Capt. Ronald L. Pilon, Intelligence Officer of the 169th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 2323 Airport Road, Peoria, Illinois. To check into the facts of this case in accordance with our policy to have such facts by direct interview as soon as possible after the sighting, I visited Peoria, Illinois on Sunday, December 10, 1961, arriving Peoria at 8:30 AM. I was met by Capt. Pilon, who had arranged a meeting at 10:00 AM in his office^{of} all the principals. Prior to the meeting, we discussed the points of this case as they had been reported to him. These were essentially the same as those reported by him through official channels.

A summary of the details obtained by direct questioning of (1) Mr. [REDACTED] (Engine Mechanic attached to the Fighter Squadron), (2) [REDACTED], (3) [REDACTED] (also attached to the squadron) and (4) Mr. [REDACTED] (farmer in the area who, with his wife, claimed has seen the same thing independently). Mr. [REDACTED] was unable to come to the general meeting so we sought him out after the meeting and after [REDACTED] site [REDACTED] and I visited the ~~sight~~ of the sighting, some 20 miles from the place of our meeting).

The principal ~~witness~~ witnesses were [REDACTED] is a recently married, young man whose father owns ~~the~~ a 900 acre farm in Madinack, Illinois. ~~MAXXWHA~~ The father is retired and young [REDACTED] is running it - very much the prosperous young farmer. The farm buildings were in fine condition and sported one of the fanciest silos I have ever seen. In the midst of this prosperity, the 169th Tactical Fighter Squadron, an Illinois Air National Guard Outfit apparently, was activated in the recent crisis, necessitating leaving a lot of farm work undone. In an attempt to meet his own crisis, Appenzeller is trying to do quite ~~at~~ a bit of the farm work at night. The [REDACTED] apparently have a very fine summer home in Northern Wisconsin and had invited on occasion [REDACTED] to visit them. Because of this obligation, [REDACTED] was also helping with the farm work, although he has no connection with it. He is a printer by trade, age 25. On the night of November 20th, we find these gentlemen plowing this field from 6:00 PM with the intention of

ready for spring planting. Two tractors were employed. [redacted] was in the lead tractor with [redacted] following a safe distance behind. It had started out overcast, but ^{by} about 9:30 or 10:00 the clouds cleared away and the moonlight was then sufficient to ^{do} their plowing by. The tractors had lights nonetheless. One starts plowing a field apparently by starting in one end and going around in ever decreasing "circles" until you end at the middle. They were well ⁱⁿ toward the center of the field when [redacted] in the lead, noticed a bright light in the southwest. I took pictures later of the area of the sky and the telephone poles used as marker sighters from the approximate position the tractors had at the time of the sighting. [redacted] following behind [redacted] saw [redacted] stop his tractor and [redacted] pulled up alongside. This operation taking, apparently, less than a minute. With tractor engines still going, [redacted] shouted over to [redacted] calling his attention to the bright light. [redacted] had pulled over to the left of [redacted] which caused him to have to look over his shoulder to see the light. Both agreed that the light was stationary, exceedingly bright and white. [redacted] looked and turned around and called back to say that that was undoubtedly Venus. [redacted] told me that ^{as} ever since a child he had had an interest in astronomy and on hiking trips waking up early in the morning he would see Venus in the sky. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ And so he was quite sure (willing to bet money) that this was Venus. At this point they shut down the tractors and lit a cigarette. They are not absolutely certain they lit a cigarette at this time but they found themselves with a cigarettes after the sighting was over, so presumably lighted them just about that time. [redacted] had just looked again at the white light, turned back to [redacted] and in a short instant looked back toward the light. In that short interval the light had broken up into numerous (8 to a dozen, they couldn't agree) other white lights, clustering about the main white light. These lights faded in and out with no apparent periodicity or pattern. They did not ever go completely out but while one dimmed and brightened three or four times another one might have dimmed only once. The lights were clustered close together and [redacted] indicated that in the spaces between the lights there would have been only enough room to fit at most one other light. This cluster of lights then moved from an elevation of about 35° and azimuth 230, in essentially a straight line to an elevation of about 20° almost directly in the east.