



Tribune photo by Michael Murphy

't buying logical explanations of his UFO sighting last weekend.

Space invaders

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Mesan reports strange objects in the sky

By MICHAEL MURPHY
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Four luminous white lights, "definitely not military," traversed the night sky Sunday in two different directions and then disappeared, according to a 38-year-old Mesa construction worker, his family and neighbors.

"It was really amazing," said Robert Navarra of 1137 W. Drummer St., near Eighth Avenue and Alma School Road in Mesa. "I'm an amateur astronomer and I go out every night."

"Between 9 and 9:10 p.m., there were eight (two groups of four) nocturnal lights. Four were heading from south to north over the city."

Bill Spaulding, director of the Valley-based Ground Saucer Watch, is investigating the sighting and believes the UFOs to be part of a military exercise.

"It looks pretty positive that the sightings are related to the military," Spaulding said. "We have suspicions that it was a military operation out of New Mexico."

Spaulding, an engineer at AiResearch, said the organization, which seeks to change *Unidentified* Flying Objects into *Identified* Flying Objects, began in 1957 in Cleveland, Ohio.

"We get about 500 calls a month and about 99 percent of the sightings are misinterpretations," he said.

Navarra was skeptical of the "military" explanation for what he saw.

"All the lights were heading in same direction, the same course. About 9:10 p.m. the same four, at least I think it was the same four, came back from north to south."

"They were a little bit smaller in brightness than the planet Jupiter, which can be seen now," he said, adding, "Satellites don't reflect that much light."

"I called the observatory in Tucson because four or five of the objects headed south," he said. "They said there

were about 2,000 or 3,000 satellites up there, but satellites travel by themselves — not in groups."

Navarra added there was an additional sighting after the first two.

"At 10:05 p.m., one appeared going north to south 45 degrees to the east," he said. "It stopped directly over us and began zigzagging."

"Then it headed east and disappeared," he added.

"My neighbors saw each one of the lights except the one after 10 p.m."

Navarra uses an 800-power telescope with different lenses and has been an amateur astronomer about 10 years.

No one was frightened at the sightings, but the neighbors were excited, he said.

"It was definitely not military and not satellites," he said.

Navarra said he has believed in UFOs for a long time and "Henry Ford and the secretary of the Navy and many others also believe in them — you can't call them stupid."

Navarra contacted the Federal Aviation Administration and Williams Air Force Base but received no confirmation of the sighting.

"The Air Force wouldn't tell me anything," he said. "Neither would the FAA."

Navarra added that he also has made daylight sightings, one of which is being investigated by GSW.

The saucer watch, which employs computers to evaluate evidence, contends that UFOs exist but are manipulations of intelligence agencies rather than extraterrestrial.

The organization is involved in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit against the Central Intelligence Agency seeking evidence of a UFO cover-up.

Spaulding said his organization has good rapport with law enforcement agencies and the Air Force, "which has been accused unduly of withholding information."

"Our whole approach is scientific," he added.