

Police investigate lights near volcano

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ST. HELENS, Ore. (AP) — Police here were bewildered about bright orange lights they saw in the sky over the Columbia River between Vancouver, Wash. and St. Helens.

Sgt. Russ Yokum of the St. Helens Police Department said he saw a light northeast of St. Helens at 4:10 a.m. Tuesday and called other officers.

He was joined by Trooper Tom McCartney of the Oregon State Police at Columbia City and three other officers, Yokum said.

McCartney said the light was dome-shaped, "as if the moon was coming up behind the hill."

Yokum said the officers and about 15 other people, some of them newspaper carriers, saw another light to the southeast at about the time the first light became obscured by the fog.

Yokum said a citizens band radio operator, Donald Atkin of Ridgefield, Wash., a few miles south of St. Helens, reported the second light was near his house

and was emitting a whining sound.

McCartney and Yokum said they talked to Atkin over their police radio and tape-recorded the sound.

Yokum played the recording for an Associated Press reporter. The sound was similar to a ship's sonar.

"It was a whining sound, not like any aircraft engine I have heard," McCartney said.

Yokum said Atkin, whose CB handle is "Lucky 13," reported seeing the light dip toward the river and heard a sound like a crash. A few minutes later, the officers said, Atkin reported the light moved away from the river and disappeared.

The officers said Atkin, who could not be reached on Tuesday, photographed the light.

McCartney and Yokum said there were no reports of aircraft in the area, and there were no reports of crashes.