

# Lights in the skies are stars, not UFOs

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CALGARY (CP) — At least one police officer only laughs at suggestions the strange twinkling lights spotted in the sky near Calgary early Monday were unidentified flying objects.

"At the ripe age of 43 I've seen a few stars in my day," said city police Staff Sgt. Tom Barrow. "I saw a few more last night."

Barrow was one of at least 20 city police officers who observed the lights which danced over Crossfield, about 30 kilometres north of Calgary. The objects varied in description from "weird, blinking stars" to "oblong discs with three levels of spinning lights."

Barrow doesn't buy the explanation they were balloons, airplanes or space crafts from another planet.

"It looked to me like it was a planet or an intensely bright star," said the former sailor who spent hours watching the sky while serving with the Canadian navy. "I'd bet my pension cheque it was a star."

Gene Milone, a professor with the

physics department at the University of Calgary and an astronomer, agrees.

He said the lights were probably the planets Venus or Jupiter and the star Sirius.

"Venus doesn't really twinkle very much," Milone said. "What can normally happen is it's so bright it captures your attention."

Venus was the subject of much myth and legend through the centuries because of its brightness as the planet made its two-year journey circling the sun, Milone explained.

Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, is often low this time of year and could account for the second light seen.

"Clouds and star light refracting off air pockets in the earth's atmosphere could explain the twinkling effect and movement of the lights seen Monday morning, he said.

Like Barrow, Milone isn't a believer in UFOs.

"I'm a believer that people see things all the time they don't know."