

Flying objects over Tucson still unidentified

Radar tracked them, people saw them, no one claims them

By TOM SHIELDS

Citizen Staff Writer

The droning was such an unusual sound in the quiet beauty of Avra Valley that it awoke Martha Ann Grill from a sound sleep.

"What the hell is going on?" Grill said as she stumbled to the door of her mobile home in the rural area northwest of Tucson.

She stood on the patio in her nightgown. Looking eastward through the misty overcast, she could see the reassuring glow of the lights of Tucson over the peaks of the mountains.

Her neighborhood was quiet, except for a car speeding somewhere and a dog barking off in the distance among the saguaros.

Airplanes or something in the sky were making the droning noise.

But once she began seeing the lights zipping by in all directions at varying speeds and not crashing into one another, she began to wonder if they were airplanes.

Unidentified flying objects.

"You never saw such a sight in your life," she said. "It was incredible."

They looked like blue, green and white lights on planes, she thought. Some were in groups and some were solo. They came from and went to the north, the

Tucson Mountains to the east, Kitt Peak National Observatory perched on a mountaintop about 15 miles across the valley to the southwest, and Ryan Field to the south.

Others skimmed the Tucson Mountains on their way eastward to the city.

Somebody must be guiding them and telling them what to do, she thought.

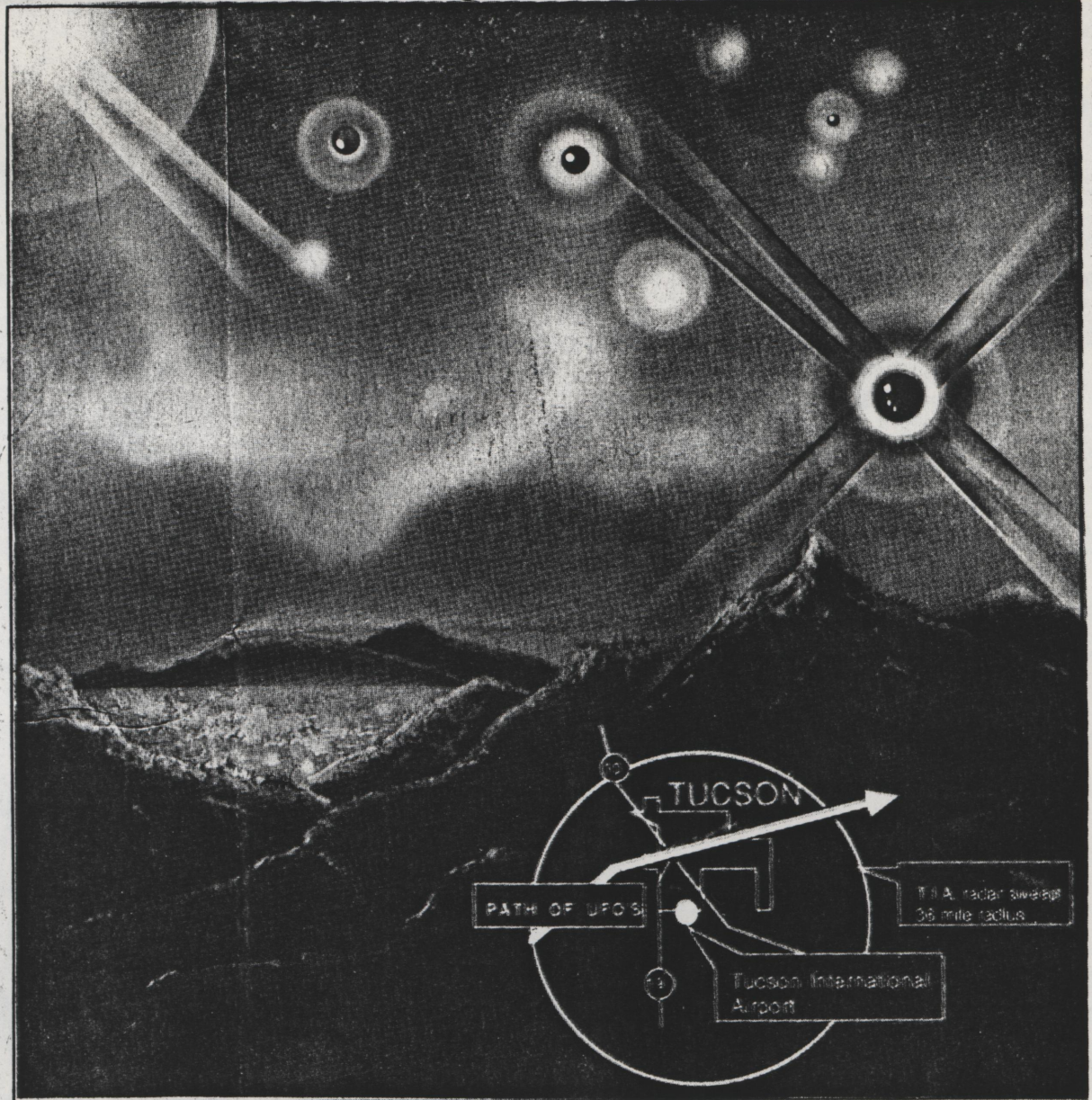
Earlier this week, Grill became the latest person to admit publicly that she saw the UFOs the night of Oct. 7, 1985.

They also were observed that night by the most professional of the watchers of the night sky.

Federal Aviation Administration radar operators at Tucson International Airport reported tracking about 15 groups of aircraft, at least 60 in all, as they flew from the Avra Valley area in the southwest, across the city, and out through Redington Pass northeast of Tucson.

Officer Timothy Clark, the pilot of Air 1, the Tucson Police helicopter that patrols the night sky of the city, saw the lights of the objects cross over the city and leave over Redington. They were going too fast for Air 1.

A man working on a plane on the ground at TIA heard the radar operator and Clark discussing the



UFOs on the radio and turned on the plane's radar. For 10 minutes, that screen revealed a large object in the sky west of the Tucson Mountains with many smaller objects flying around it.

Officials at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and at other military

installations in Arizona have said repeatedly that no military exercises, secret or otherwise, were under way during the aerial display. They said they knew nothing about the incident.

"Nope, we don't deal with UFOs," Lt. Julie Fortenberry, a

public information officer at Davis-Monthan, said a few days after the sighting. "We're not pursuing it."

Nevertheless, for more than an hour that night, things with lights

FLYING, continued/2D