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# Flying object lights up Sierra sky

*McClatchy News Service*

GRASS VALLEY — A silent but colorful flying object zoomed across the sky over the Sierra foothills just before dawn yesterday, according to some local residents who witnessed the brief event.

U.S. air defense officials said they had no explanation.

"It was a bluish-green light with a large tail," said Ron Talmage, a security officer who was nearing the end of a night shift when he saw the unidentified object.

"It had little pieces flaking off of it like it was something burning while it was coming down," he said. "Working nights, I see meteorites, little ones, all the time. This was spectacular and it seemed like it was just a few miles away."

The blaze of color, reported by most observers to have occurred just before 5 a.m., was seen over a 40-mile area ranging from Colfax to Penn Valley.

Jim Kerr, news director for KNCO Radio in Grass Valley, said callers were lighting up the station's switchboards yesterday morning.

"The descriptions varied quite a bit," said Kerr. "One person said it looked like a sudden floodlight in the sky. Another one called it an explosion."

Beale Air Force Base officials could not identify the object, and officials of the North American Aerospace Defense Command in Colorado said there were no re-entering satellites or missile launches in the area, according to Associated Press reports.

At Vandenberg Air Force Base near Lompoc, Capt. Tom Connell said he received five calls, including one from Redding, from people who had seen strange sights in the sky.

Connell said the base had no aircraft over Northern California yesterday morning and had had no missile launches. "There was nothing going on this morning at all," he said.

A bright flash or flying object was reported by several employees of Grass Valley Group, an electronics manufacturer with split work shifts and early-rising employees.

Most said the sight lasted about two seconds, but at least one observer estimated it endured up to a minute.

"I was driving to work. It was so strange," said Betty Lane, an assembler with the company. "It was a big light going across the sky, kind of like fireworks. It was like an explosion. I watched it through the tops of the trees."

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