

# Mystery 'blast' rattles Otsego, stumps officials

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MORRIS — A mysterious noise accompanied by vibrations that reportedly shook houses in Morris and Burlington Flats yesterday had police and government agencies baffled about its origins.

Reports of a sound similar to an explosion came from a 20-mile radius of Morris. Otsego County's Communication Control Center in Cooperstown received its first call at 10:37 a.m. from a Morris man, said director Roy Altheiser. New York State Police at Oneonta said they received several reports of a "blast-like" sound.

"We were sitting in our home and watching TV and suddenly the whole house went vavoom," said Frederick Fusco of Route 23, Morris. "It sounded like a plane crash."

Fusco said his three-story house began to

shudder, and that he ran outside to see if his chimney was still standing.

Meanwhile, 18 miles away, Elizabeth Carney said she was doing kitchen chores when she was jolted by the sound. Carney, who lives on Route 51, Burlington Flats, said she was frightened by the noise.

"We thought one of our propane tanks blew up. It frightened the children and it shook trailers and houses for miles," Carney said.

Carney said many neighbors told her they also were startled by the noise. "It really shook up people at the Morris Trailer Park," she said.

Gerald Cammisia of Dimock Hollow Road in Morris said he telephoned sheriff's deputies to inquire whether anyone was using explosives in the area. Altheiser contacted the New York Power Authority, but was in-

formed that no blasting was conducted in Morris. The Marcy South hydroelectric line is under construction, and power authority workers are clearing land for towers in Laurens.

Cindy Welcher, a waitress at the Village Coffee Shop in Morris, said coffee cups rattled after she heard the noise.

Sgt. Edward Hallett, a public relations specialist at Griffiss Air Force Base in Utica, said he received several telephone inquiries about a loud noise. "It sounds interesting, but we didn't have any aircraft flying at that time in that area," Hallett said.

David Bowman, a spokesman at the Federal Aviation Administration tracking station in Nashua, N.H., said there was no indication of an airplane crash anywhere in Otsego County. The tracking station re-

ports flight patterns throughout the northeastern section of the United States, he said.

The Town of Morris is located on a geological fault, and earthquakes have been recorded in upstate New York, Altheiser said. However, there was no indication of any earth tremor yesterday, said Francis Wu, a professor in the science department at the state University Center at Binghamton. He said an earthquake with a reading of 2 or higher on the Richter scale would have registered on his seismographic equipment. No unusual ground activity of any kind was recorded yesterday, he said.

"Of course, the instruments might not pick up something like a quarry blast," he said.