

Witnesses: UFOs are military craft

By The Associated Press

WYTHEVILLE, Va. — Five people who claim to have seen UFOs said Friday a secret military operation has stirred up the recent flying saucer craze in Wythe County, but they offered no evidence to back the assertion.

"It appears we are dealing with something of a military nature," said news director Danny Gordon of radio station WYVE. He and four other people talked about sightings they said they made Thursday night.

"A lot of people are scared," Gordon told reporters. "Will the military please tell us where they are?"

Spokesmen for various branches of the military have denied knowledge of operations that would have prompted the series of flying saucer reports that began in September.

One of the members of the panel assembled by Gordon, New York photographer John Stember, said he took a videotape and still photographs Thursday night of a dome-shaped object flying in tandem with a smaller, roundish object.

"I saw this large, sort of orange glow," Stember said. "The first seemed to be a large domed shape, with an ambient light behind it."

He said his still pictures were being pro-

cessed, but the pictures would be available to reporters. But when approached after the news conference, Stember said he had removed his film from the area to protect it.

Another member of the panel, Andrew Convery, a systems analyst with the Virginia Beach-based Navy software contractor Computer Dynamics Inc., said he believed there had been some kind of crash in the area. He refused to elaborate and refused to say why he would not elaborate.

"We have very substantial reasons, we just can't produce any proof," Convery said.

Convery said he had come to Wytheville on his own time because he for years has followed UFO stories. He said he thinks the military is operating the mysterious flights because other military craft operate routinely in the area.

Convery said he does not think the military would fly its jets at low altitudes in the area of flying objects it could not identify.

"They fly aircraft over the top while these things are flying down below," Convery said.

Gordon said some of the UFOs have swooped down and harassed motorists in the county, at times chasing them down the road with spotlights on them or even running some people off the road.

"Imagine you're a bored fighter jock," Convery said. "To relieve the tedium you chase a local around."