

MD. GAZETTE 12/2/87

# Mysterious light flashes over north county sky

**"We got a lot of calls about it. People were saying we had planes crashing everywhere and stuff like that . . . It's just probably part of a meteor shower."**

By PHIL WILLON  
Staff Writer

Anne Arundel County police were flooded with calls early Tuesday morning about mysterious lights in the sky.

They were not alone.

Lights described variously as strange blue lights, a fireball and a meteor shower were seen from Virginia to New York, authorities said.

"We got quite a few calls about the thing around 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. Even several of our officers in the Western District saw what appeared to be a ball of

fire in the sky," said police spokesman Officer V. Richard Molloy.

One Millersville resident who saw the cosmic phenomenon said it was as big and as bright as the sun.

"I looked up in the sky and the ball or orange, like the sun or a star, came shooting out of the sky," said Sara King Warnick of Seven Chapel Road.

"I was in bed sleeping when my dog started going crazy barking," she said. "When I went outside I saw it. It was big. It was huge."

Ms. Warnick called officials at the

Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

"Who knows it could have been a plane crashing or something," she said.

The bright ball of light was spotted by one air traffic controller in the airport's tower, but officials there still aren't sure just what the object was.

"We got a lot of calls about it. People were saying we had planes crashing everywhere and stuff like that," said Mike Sarli, manager of air traffic. "One of our guys saw it. It's just probably part of a meteor shower."

Elsewhere, the Coast Guard and the Delaware State Police received numerous calls beginning about 12:40 a.m.

A boiler room attendant at Wallops Island NASA Flight Center on Virginia's Eastern Shore reported seeing "a big blue light that lit the whole sky almost like lightning.

"After that, I saw two balls of like fire, only not a red fire . . . a white fire," said Eddie Quillen.

"That was one hell of a light, whatever it was."

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## ...Mysterious light

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In Cape May, N.J., Coast Guard Petty Officer Carlos Johnson said he received a radio report from a ship in the Delaware Bay at 12:38 a.m.

"We figure it's a meteor shower. We just assumed that due to the fact we had so many calls, from Virginia to New York," Johnson said.

Reports described it a "yellowish white bright light" that traveled from north to south, "lit everything up and then kind of dispersed," he said.

Dover Air Force Base, Del., said it was not aware of the lights and a security guard at Wallops Island flight center said no rockets had been launched from there. A Federal Aviation Administration official said no plane collisions had been reported.

"They're describing it as a fireball, but there's no reports of a missing plane or anything," said a

Delaware State Police dispatcher in northern New Castle County who said the police were inundated with calls.

At the Worcester County 911 call board in Snow Hill, a dispatcher said the first reports came in about 12:45 a.m.

"We didn't keep track at first because we thought people were a little crazy," he said.

**MEL SAUNDERS** Via COUD—I  
PYRAMID RESEARCH CENTER  
BOX 5271 FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33310 USA