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Flying saucer mystery at the Shore

By PATRICK JENKINS

Was it or wasn't it?

It was reported as a UFO to the Federal Aviation Administration Technical Center shortly after 9 p.m. Tuesday and hovering or slow-moving lights were confirmed by responding police officers, according to Tech Center spokesman Anthony Willett.

But in a statement yesterday, Egg Harbor Township police said what the officers saw was a slow-moving aircraft flying at several thousand feet.

The only problem with that explanation was that there were no aircraft in the area at that time, according to FAA radar, Willett said.

"We received the report of a green light or lights that appeared to be hovering over the Egg Harbor Township area," said Willett.

"We checked with the Atlantic City tower and nothing unusual appeared. The only air traffic in the area that evening was two large military planes coming up from Dover, Del., and they were in well before this. They also do not hover," Willett said.

In their statement, the Egg Harbor Township police said officers were dispatched to the area where the object was supposed to have been sighted and were told by a young male that his friends saw some UFO's hovering in the sky.

"Upon (the officers') arrival, nothing out of the ordinary was located except what appeared to be an airplane flying east to west north of that location several thousand feet from the ground," the police said.

But, again, there was nothing on the radar screen.

Could it have been lights from nearby Hamilton Mall reflecting off clouds?

"It was a crystal clear night with a full moon and visibility of 12 miles," said Willett.

Or maybe some kind of astronomical or weather phenomenon?

"We have nothing to do with UFO's," said a technician at the National Weather Service station at the Tech Center.

"I have nothing to say about UFO's, whether they're concerned with weather or anything else. We don't deal with anything like that at all. We're a weather office," said the man, adding, "This is just a weather technician speaking."

A spokesman for the National UFO Reporting Center in Washington said no reports of the incident had been received there.

Willett said there was no ongoing investigation of the sighting.

"We just noted the report. As I've said on other occasions, reports of this nature are not uncommon. It's a very big, dark sky in South Jersey," he added.