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Strange fireball streaks over Waco

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ever, that a shower is not necessary for such a phenomenon to occur.

"There are periodic meteors. They can fall at any time," Adams said. "You have to be pretty lucky to see a very big one."

Recently, Soviet rockets, after hoist-

ing their payloads into space and making a couple of lifeless revolutions around the planet, have made dazzling re-entries into the Earth's atmosphere.

On March 25, 1988, a Soviet rocket launched to resupply a manned space station hit air over San Antonio, producing a blazing display visible for more than a minute in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. A retired meteorologist who

witnessed it said it looked like a blue ball at first, but then colored much of the sky in red, orange and white.

On Jan. 20, another Russian rocket sputtered over Texas and disintegrated.

In November 1987, a Soviet satellite launched two months earlier returned to earth in another fiery breakup visible from Waco

Strange fireball streaks through sky over Waco

By ROBERT CADWALLADER
Tribune-Herald staff writer

As a Department of Public Safety trooper patrolling at night, Bruce Eden has seen his share of falling stars.

The one Thursday night, though, was different.

"This one was straight falling," he said. "It didn't appear to be a horizontal motion like where you see them shooting across the sky. It was big. It was a real bright green. It had a tail like a shooting star, but you could tell it was really burning as it passed through the atmosphere."

"It went behind the clouds, and the clouds glowed green."

Eden and several other area law enforcement officials were among numerous Texans who watched the flaming object cross the state from north to south shortly after 11 p.m. Thursday.

Despite early speculation that another disintegrating Soviet rocket had caused the sky-searing fireworks display, authorities said Friday it appears to have been the result of an unusually large meteor burning its way through the earth's atmosphere.

"No, this doesn't correlate with anything we've been tracking," said Maj. Alex Mondragon, a spokesman for NORAD — the North American Aerospace Defense Command — and the U.S. Space Command, which provides space and missile tracking information to NORAD. "The only thing I could offer is that it's from some sort of natural phenomenon."

The two agencies, located in Colorado, re-

ceived "calls from practically all over Texas now," he added.

"Some said it was a blue light. Some said it looked very close, like it might have impacted on the ground," Mondragon said. "A lot of the descriptions were similar to what meteors look like."

Eden apparently had no trouble keeping his composure.

"Yeah, it was something a little different," he said. "I thought, that's a little nifty. I heard some truckers talking about it on the C.B. Then the office called me and asked if I saw anything unusual."

"I said, 'Yeah.'"

Woodway Police Chief Yousry Zakhary conducted a quick investigation prompted by a Woodway caller who reported "some orange ball in the sky" near the Lehigh Portland Cement Co.

"We never saw it," Zakhary said. "We checked it out. Nothing was there. We closed out the report."

Mutual UFO Network Inc. in Seguin said witnesses in Corpus Christi reported hearing a sonic boom believed caused by the meteor.

"If it is big enough to cause a sonic boom, then something came to the ground," said Walter Andrus Jr., international director of MUFON, which claims to be the world's largest organization that studies UFOs. "It means there is some debris left over."

Baylor physics professor Bill Adams said no meteor showers are in progress. He added, how-

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