

UFO POTPOURRI

no. 362

4A

Houston Chronicle

Saturday, April 18, 1992

Whole lotta shakin'

Sonic booms telltale signs of Aurora, said to be next-generation spy plane

By EDMUND NEWTON

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — It has happened again. There was a brief rumble, like somebody moving bulky furniture around, and the ground lurched, San Gabriel Valley residents said Thursday morning. Then, just as they were about to head for their door frames, it was gone.

The mysterious rumble and bounce has occurred five times since June, always about 7 a.m. on Thursdays. These were no earthquakes, but a passing aircraft, California Institute of Technology seismologists said.

"All I can say is that it's something that's traveling through the atmosphere at several times the speed of sound in a generally northeasterly direction," said Jim Mori, a seismologist with the United States Geological Survey at the California Institute of Technology.

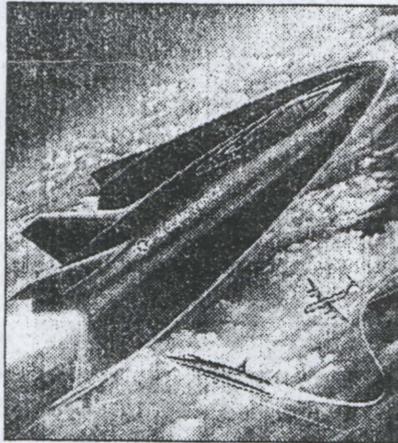
Analysts from the London-based Jane's Defense Weekly said the Thursday morning phenomenon could be a top-secret spy plane, dubbed the Aurora, that can fly up to about 4,000 mph.

The Air Force denies such an aircraft exists.

But Jane's Editor Bill Sweetman says there are indications the airplane is one of the Defense Department's "black" programs, a top-secret project whose funding is disguised in the defense procurement budget.

Seismologists who recorded similar rumbles in June, October, November and January said the aircraft's turbulence has a distinctive signature, or wave pattern, on the seismograph unlike that of any known aircraft, Mori said.

Sweetman said the knowledge of the mysterious aircraft first came from a 1986 Defense Department budget report, in which the Aurora was listed next to the SR-71 Blackbird and the U-2, two Air Force spy planes. That was the last official



Chronicle files

An artist's conception of the top-secret Aurora spy plane.

reference to the Aurora, said Sweetman.

"It got in there through an accidental slip," he said. "It should have been edited out."

Ever since, military analysts have associated reports of mysterious sonic booms with experimental supersonic aircraft, Sweetman said.

Jane's analysts believe that the Aurora is being prepared as a replacement for the Blackbird, which was retired in 1989.

The publication Aviation Week & Space Technology last month reported recent nighttime sightings of an unknown aircraft with a diamond-shaped lighting pattern near Beale Air Force Base in Yuba County, Calif.

The aircraft, with a red light near the nose, an amber light near the tail and white lights near the wingtips, was seen in tight formation with a pair of F-117 Stealth fighters and a KC-135Q refueling tanker, the publication said.

The aircraft, which quickly extinguished its lights after joining the formation, had a distinctive engine noise, like "air rushing through a big tube," the publication said.

DEFENSE

Mysterious Sky Lights May Point To Secret Plane

Aviation Week magazine has reported sightings at night of light patterns that might be lights on a secret military airplane. The patterns have been seen recently near Beale Air Force Base, Calif.

The light patterns have been diamond-shaped when seen from the ground. The lights have been seen in formation with F-117 stealth fighters and KC-135 tanker planes. The lights of trainer planes also have been seen near the diamond pattern.

The aircraft with the distinctive lights also had a distinctive sound, described by one observer as "a very, very low rumble, like air rushing through a big tube."

Beale, northeast of San Francisco, was the home base of Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird reconnaissance planes before the Blackbirds were retired from service.

The fact that the strange-sounding plane was flying with F-117 fighters suggests that it might perform a reconnaissance function to assist the fighters.

Robert Sanford

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

MONDAY, MARCH 23, 1992

CALIFORNIA

NASA To Seek Signs Of Aliens In Space

NASA will move radio and computer equipment to the Mojave Desert next week so that it can start searching for signs of alien civilizations in outer space, a scientist said Thursday in Pasadena.

"I strongly believe someday we will make contact with other civilizations" through radio signals, said Michael Klein, manager of Jet Propulsion Laboratory's portion of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) project.

AP

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

• SATURDAY, JANUARY 18, 1992

BY JOHN F. SCHUESSLER

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Outer limits of credibility

Anomalous phenomena fans find some ideas just too odd

By **BO EMERSON**
Cox News Service

Eric Beckjord probably lost his audience when he claimed that aliens had sculpted a mammoth likeness of Grumpy the Dwarf among the craters of Mars.

The doctors, physicists, psychiatrists, biochemists and others who had gathered in Decatur, Ga., last weekend to discuss crop circles, remote viewing and alien abduction just weren't buying it.

"This is the kind of thing that gives the study of anomalous phenomena a bad name," grumped Col. John B. Alexander of Santa Fe, N.M., former Green Beret and military intelligence expert.

Such was the atmosphere at the fourth meeting of TREAT (Treatment and Research of Experienced Anomalous Trauma), a group founded by New York psychiatrist Rima Laibow to deal with what appeared to be post-traumatic stress in patients who claimed to have experienced alien abduction.

Laibow said the commonality of experience in the abduction community warranted serious inquiry. "These were basically healthy people who were telling absolutely incredible stories, and showing the impact of their experiences, both psychological and physical."

Since its first meeting in May 1989, TREAT has expanded its concerns to include all sorts of weird occurrences, which explains why Beckjord, director of the Center for Cryptophenomena in Malibu, Calif., was showing slides of Bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster and other popular landmarks of the extraordinary.

The four-day meeting was far from a gathering of true believers, and was in fact notable for its lack of consensus. Proponents of telekinesis hissed the mention of dowsing (finding water with a forked stick). Theories of demonic extraterrestrials were both supported and rejected. One group listened raptly to a description of an anti-stress device called BETAR that was promptly criticized by others. The exchanges were vigorous.

Mark Woodhouse, who teaches courses in Eastern religion and consciousness research at Georgia State

University, organized this year's meeting. His interest, he says, is simply curiosity.

One of his students is 19-year-old Justin Beals, a BETAR operator in a Malcolm X cap, who introduces himself as a trance channeler. Beals experienced a "kundalini awakening" during one of Woodhouse's courses, he says, which led him in a roundabout way to the TREAT meeting. "I'm interested in bringing together science and the spirit," Beals said. "It's time for both of them to shake hands."

For their \$85 registration fee, about 75 guests received access to four days of lectures and workshops, free beverages and entertainment by comic Steve Bhaerman, who performs in lotus position and Bozo wig as Swami Beyondananda.

"There are no flakes here," observed Bhaerman's wife, Trudy Lite, who joins her husband onstage and is a habitue of New Age seminars. "You go to other places, you get a lot more of the granola crowd."

While Bhaerman's philosophical humor is ultimately accessible, at the other extreme was the presentation by physicist Ilobrand von Ludwiger, who spoke on UFOs and the unified field theory. With the aid of an overhead projector, he ran through dense tables of multivariable equations to prove such theses as "particle physics theory extended into 12 dimensions thus allows full quantization." This thrilled some and left others gasping for air.

An Emory University biochemist, who asked that his name not be used (because associations with UFOs "can be very detrimental to your professional standing"), pronounced himself baffled by von Ludwiger, but impressed. "It was beyond me," he said.

For information, call TREAT headquarters at (914) 693-8827 or write to P.O. Box 728, Ardsley, N.Y. 10502-0728.

In Wisconsin

Hairless creature attacks dog

HILLSBORO — Ed Hora and his 19-year-old son, Brian, were feeding cattle when they heard their beagle barking outside the barn last week.

As they watched, a strange hairless creature jumped out of a pile of hay bales and began fighting with the dog.

Hora grabbed a pipe and hit it. The bizarre-looking animal was completely hairless, 2 feet long, and had a 9-inch tail.

"I'll tell you, it was a strange looking thing," said Brian's mother, Donna Hora. "With no hair, it upset my stomach to look at it."

Richard Wallin, Viroqua warden with the Department of Natural Resources since 1975, said Monday he is sure it is a raccoon.

"It's possible it is something in its genetics — an oddity," Wallin said. "I would guess it was a yearling raccoon born last May. It was a female about the size of a year-old raccoon."

Water for the red planet

Vice President Dan Quayle prompted astonishment from scientists in 1989 when he told a television interviewer that "we've seen pictures (of Mars) where there are canals, we believe, and water." But it now appears he wasn't far off.

While there are no canals on the red planet, there is new evidence that Mars has water frozen just under the surface in the warm (by Martian standards) equatorial regions that previous calculations had suggested could not harbor ice. Planetary scientists had long suspected underground ice existed only closer to the poles.

David A. Paige of the University of California at Los Angeles has reexamined the thermodynamics of ice under Martian conditions and concluded that there could be some ground-ice deposits just a few feet below the surface and that "these deposits could be a valuable resource for human exploration."



HOUSTON CHRONICLE 4/13/92