

MELBOURNE SUN 3/1/79

UFO film different, say pilots

AUCKLAND, Tues., AAP. — Two New Zealand pilots said tonight the film of UFOs taken off the Kaikoura coast at the weekend did not show what they saw.

The pilots, Captain Bill Startup and First Officer Robert Guard said they had seen a bright white light, not a colored object as recorded on the TV film.

The pilots, who fly for Safair, an air cargo operator, made the statement after watching the film.

Their plane carried the TV crew which made the film for Melbourne's Channel O.

Both airmen denied that the sighting might have been the planet Venus.

The first officer said: "We could see Venus at the same time but Venus was miles away."

The pilots who made the sightings early on Sunday morning and in the early hours of December 21 are all experienced.

Some have been flying for more than 25 years.

On the film, the object jerked about the screen leading the airmen to suggest camera shake.

Kept station

They said the spectacular bright light they had watched in the pre-dawn hours off the mouth of the Clarence River in Marlborough province had kept station with them till they turned their Argosy cargo plane toward it.

The Wellington cameraman who shot the film for the Melbourne channel, David Crockett, said he had used a hand-held camera to follow the object "which darted all over the place."

The Royal New Zealand Air Force last night started an all-night patrol over the South Island's north-east coast where UFO sightings have been reported.

An Auckland-based Orion patrol plane was due in the area early tomorrow morning to sweep the sky until dawn.

...and the RAAF plays it cool

CANBERRA. — The RAAF refused to get excited about the record number of UFO reports it has received in the past two days.

A RAAF spokesman said yesterday 20 sighting reports had been received since New Year's Eve.

The previous record of 19 was set in the week after Victorian pilot Frederick Valentich went missing off Cape Otway on October 21, after reporting sighting an unidentified flying object.

The spokesman said an average of about 50 sightings were reported to the RAAF each year, but there was nothing unusual in the recent rush.

He said the reports, which the RAAF calls unidentified aerial sightings because it believes UFO is a misnomer, are referred to a special section in the Defence Department, the Directorate of Air Force Intelligence, for investigation.

From NIKI SAVVA

"We have been conducting the investigations since 1960," he said.

"We have investigated between 1100 and 1200 in that time, and we can readily explain 80 per cent as natural phenomena."

He said of the remaining 20 per cent, 17 per cent did not give sufficient data for investigation, and 3 per cent were unexplained.

"We firmly believe the majority of the 3 per cent are hoaxes," he said.

The spokesman said the RAAF had not received a report from the New Zealand Air Force on the UFO sightings, and did not expect to.

Vip...
 A...
 7...
 M...
 Ad...
 Jo...
 Ad...
 Per...
 You...
 Bro...
 Bar...
 pa...
 mo...
 inc...
 5...
 0...