

Victor UFO believed to be meteorite

The Department of Defence believes that the "unidentified flying object" which fell into the ocean at Encounter Bay on Saturday was most likely a meteorite.

Defence Department Public Relations officer, Major A.S. Reynolds said yesterday his department had been informed by the Federal Department of Science that the object would most likely have been a meteorite as occurred off the South Australian coast in 1982.

Maj. Reynolds said the RAAF had no intentions at this stage of investigating sightings of the "UFO".

"We have found a number of holes in weekend newspaper reports of the incident, one of which was that an RAAF Hercules did not sight the object," he said.

"However I am asking people to write to

me with their eyewitness accounts and should circumstances then warrant, the RAAF may look into the incident," he added.

Maj. Reynolds asked eyewitnesses to contact him in writing at Keswick Barracks.

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The object was seen by dozens of people, both locally and as far south as Port MacDonnell in the South-East and south-western Victoria.

As well as the main object, which plummeted into the ocean off Encounter Bay at about midday on Saturday, another piece is reported to have fallen into the ocean near Chiton Rocks.

Victor Harbor police were first alerted to the incident at 1.20 pm when they received a call from the Police Communications centre in Adelaide that numerous reports had been received from along the coast of either a meteorite or space junk entering the atmosphere then breaking up and falling into the ocean.

Local resident, Mr George Thorn said his wife had seen what appeared to be a distress flare east of Granite Island, from their home in Hindmarsh Road, Victor Harbor.

Mr Thorn got his binoculars, focussed on the spot and saw what appeared to be a red

and white boat going up off a wave, falling back into the sea and disappearing.

Mr Thorn contacted police, who in turn contacted the Victor Harbor-Goolwa Sea Rescue squadron to assist.

Spokesman for the squadron, Mr Glen Goldsack said three boats were launched to search for possible missing crew.

"We called on another three boats to launch to join the search when Victor Harbor

launch to join the search when Victor Harbor police received a call from Adelaide Airport that an aircraft had sighted an object falling into the water off Victor Harbor, the search was then abandoned," he said.

A large piece had reportedly fallen into the ocean 100 metres off the coast from the Chiton Rocks Surf Lifesaving Club.

The police contacted the Club which confirmed that something had fallen into the sea at about noon.

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Mr Brian Orchard said he walked out of the front door of his Port Elliot esplanade home just after midday and saw a brilliant spear of gold and white flame about three metres above the water, heading straight down, directly off the beach in front of the surf club house.

"The flame was very noticeable, even in broad daylight with the sun shining," he said. "I know it could not be a flare as it was

... said. "I knew it could not be a flare as it was travelling too fast," he added.

Mr Orchard immediately phoned Mr Jim Miller at the Chiton club house who said there was no one on the beach from the club letting off flares.

He investigated further at the beach, but found nothing.

Meanwhile the story has created interest in the eastern States, with local police receiving telephone calls from Sydney newspapers all day Sunday.