

# Possible Rachel UFOs: Lighted Weather Balloons

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 Date: Wed, 11 Jun 1997 20:50:42 -0800  
 Subject: Possible Rachel UFOs: Lighted Weather Balloons

I talked to a former Nevada Test Site worker today.

He says that a lot of weather balloons were released prior to each bomb test at the Test Site. Balloons, which are called "pi-balls", were released every hour starting two days before any test, and Rachel was one of the areas where balloons were released. The balloons were tracked visually for an actual measure of upper-air winds. (Since the balloon ascends at a known rate, all you need to measure is the compass direction and angle of elevation.)

During the day, the 2-meter balloons were easy to track just by sighting on the balloon itself, but at night you could not see them, so two lights were hung from the bottom. (There were two lights, not one, because of the worry that one of them might burn out.)

These lighted balloons made great UFOs, my source said, especially because the two lights often seemed to dance around each other. He himself was fooled by one once, until he found a DOE truck parked in the desert and he reported his "UFO" sighting to them. They had a good laugh at his expense.

My source says that for various purposes, balloons were also occasionally released in groups of three, and then the "average" of their position was used to gauge the movement of the air mass.

The actual state of upper-air winds was of crucial importance in case there was any venting from the atomic tests (which were conducted underground in later years). The optimal path of the desired winds was directly over Rachel, because that was the least populated direction.

The last atomic test was in 1992, but balloons were also released for non-nuclear chemical release tests, which continue to be conducted today. (These tests involve the release of a convention toxic gas, like hydrochloride acid, to develop techniques for handling commercial spills.) It isn't clear whether they are still releasing lighted balloons for current chemical tests.

Just another animal to add to our aerial phenomena "zoo."

Glenn

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 GLENN CAMPBELL - Government Disinformation Agent  
 "Who does he really work for?"

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