

# Tremorous Night of the Death Ray

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News Review

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TREMOROUS NIGHT OF THE DEATH RAY

BLINDING WHITE LIGHT AND PEOPLE THROWN TO THE GROUND

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Was it a meteor that struck Western Australia in 1993 or something more sinister? GREG ANSLEY reports  
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CANBERRA - Shortly after 11 pm, in the deep black of an outback night, a fireball grew slowly over the Western Australian goldfields and flew parallel to the ground, before diving to earth beyond the distant trees.

The handful of people watching were blinded by what was described as "a massive nuclear-sized flash" of white light and thrown to the ground by an explosion and earthquake.

A huge red-coloured flare soared into the atmosphere, followed by the appearance on the horizon of a large, red hemisphere - similar to "half a setting sun" - three times the size of the moon and lined at its edges with silver.

This phenomenon glowed for two hours across the arid landscape near Leonora, a mining town 240km north of Kalgoorlie, before vanishing abruptly "as if someone had thrown a light switch." While it was still in the sky, an hour after the first fireball, two smaller fireballs appeared from low in the south, and crashed to earth with smaller explosions and ground tremors.

Eye-witness accounts were matched by 23 seismic stations operated by the Australian Geological Survey Organisation, which reported a tremor from the first explosion of 3.9 on the Richter scale. The two subsequent tremors did not register.

The event was officially described as a meteor strike. But was it? This week the New York Times, quoting a series of inquiries into the May 28, 1993, fireball over Western Australia, reported speculation that the phenomenon could have been a nuclear blast. A United States Senate inquiry has also taken seriously the theory that it was a test of a secret Russian super-weapon able to induce earthquakes a hemisphere away.

Beyond this speculation of a death ray of unthinkable power lies a conspiracy theory wild enough to fit comfortably in either paranoid fantasy or "believe-it-or-not" reality.

Many scientists and defence analysts ridicule the idea but an eclectic group of Japanese investigative reporters and Australian and American researchers believe the Russians have had such a weapon since 1963. They believe that it was tested in West Australia in 1993 in conjunction with the Aum Shinri Kyo sect, which is also believed to have used an outback station to test the lethal sarin gas used to kill 12 people in a Tokyo subway in 1995.

"I think the explosion and the fireball were the testing of an electromagnetic weapon, an earthquake-inducing weapon," said Perth geophysicist Harry Mason, who has been investigating the cause since he flew over the impact area in 1993 and could find no trace of meteor, meteor fragments, or even of the crater that would logically be created by an impact producing the release of energy estimated to have been the equivalent of a 1-2 kiloton atomic blast.

The West Australian police, who, along with other domestic intelligence and police agencies, investigated the fireball and the theories surrounding it, concluded it was a natural event.

So did the United States Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS), which was approached during the American Senate inquiry. IRIS used seismic recordings of the event from a digital station at Narrogin, and compared them with others of a mine blast near Kalgoorlie and an earthquake near Norseman, in the south of the state.

While IRIS accepted the possibility that the fireball could have been a clandestine event - occurring as it did in a remote area inadequately covered by seismic recording equipment and which was subject to shallow earthquakes from mine blasts - it decided the most logical explanation was meteor strike. But IRIS wants to make further inquiries.

The theory that it was anything but a natural event rests in the belief that for decades, Russian scientists (and, more recently, others from the Western powers) have seriously investigated the theories of Nikola Tesla, the eccentric Croatian-born genius whose discovery of the rotating magnetic field and invention of alternating-current generators underpins modern technology.

Tesla's most important contribution to knowledge, however, was the discovery of terrestrial stationary waves, proving, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, that the Earth could be used as a conductor and "would be as responsive as a tuning fork to electrical vibrations."

He was to light 200 lamps 40km away without using wires, and created man-made lightning. But it his more outlandish claims, documented in laboratory and other papers held in Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Museum, which have allegedly captured more recent attention.

Tesla claimed he could snap the Earth in two, could destroy aircraft 400 km away with a death ray, and could use electromagnetism to dump vast amounts of energy in microseconds on any target he wished. He is reported to have developed equipment able within seconds to generate millions of horsepower from the input of just a few horsepower, with the possibility of transmitting the vastly-increased energy.

According to Mr Mason, United States sources have confirmed that the Russians ignored the scientific ridicule which greeted Tesla's claims, and set to work developing an earthquake-inducing weapon. This allegedly became operational in the early 1960s. In the early 1990s, Japanese investigators say, the Aum sect also sent a team to Belgrade to examine Tesla's writings.

Mr Mason said Japanese colleagues have evidence of a 1990 meeting in Moscow, between Aum leader Shoko Asahara, his deputy, two right-wing Japanese MPs backing the sect, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, and his KGB chief. At that meeting Gorbachev supposedly offered the Japanese their super-weapon technology in return for help in developing a second-generation weapon matched to sophisticated Japanese computers.

The outcome of this, said Mr Mason, was the creation of a joint Russian-Japanese university in Moscow, ostensibly for cultural studies but in fact operated by the Aum sect and employing Japanese and Russian nuclear physicists.

Cold War warrior United States Senator Sam Nunn was sufficiently worried to claim the sect had tried to smuggle nuclear weapons out of Russia and to have tried to develop them within Japan.

In early 1993, one of Asahara's deputies visited Russia before coming to Australia to buy Banjawarn station, a 200,000 hectare sheep station in the outback. It is believed that the sect tested sarin gas there: toxicology tests on 24 sheep carcasses and nearby soil showed traces of methylphosphoric acid, which occurs when sarin gas breaks down.

Mr Mason believes there was an even darker purpose behind the sect's Banjawarn operations. He said while the sect was looking at properties the leader of the buying team spent time away from the owners, and was seen using a small portable drill to bore two small holes in the ground, connect electrodes to a small machine the size of a fax, measure "some sort of parameters" for several hours, then number-crunch all night on a laptop computer.

"I'm a geologist and geophysicist and I couldn't figure out what he was doing, because normally when you're surveying you would have electrodes along a line, looking at something," said Mr Mason. "You wouldn't normally measure a parameter - whatever it was - on one site for several hours then number-crunch all night. It was a bit odd."

Enter the death ray: "US researchers believe what was demonstrated (during the 1993 fireball) was the earthquake-inducing power of the weapon, followed by a Tesla shield, produced by the same technology."

The Tesla shield, apparently, is an anti-ballistic missile defence. The theory is that as the missile passes through the silver lining of the red semi-hemisphere seen over West Australia, its electronics and

navigation systems are disabled. For ICBMs which also have a mechanical altimeter to trigger detonation if electronics fail, the red hemisphere's electromagnetic energy apparently interferes with the isotopes of the nuclear warhead and, again, disables the weapon.

"The sect needed that remote station to test the weapon to see if it would work at the sort of ranges they needed it to work at," said Mr Mason. There is evidence from the United States and Europe that there are transmitters in Kamchatka (Siberia) and the Russian Arctic islands, and very strong suspicions that one of the transmitters may be in the Antarctic.

"It appears that the fireball itself is an enormous slug of electrical energy as it travels through the air - a giant plasma ball, if you like. They will transmit on two or more frequencies from two or more transmitter sites: one part to handle the plasma on to the target; the other to decide whether you want it into the air or on to the ground, and where you want the energy to release.

"By interfering with that transmission you can dump massive amounts of energy in seconds. Tesla talked about dumping in one microsecond the combined power of all the naval dreadnoughts in existence in 1908.

"We're talking about something far worse than nuclear weapons. This is horrific. Apparently there are variations on it, where you don't get flash or damage from explosion or earthquake - you just kill all life instantaneously in the target area.

"I hasten to add, that what I can confirm are my interviews with those who saw or experienced the event. But the people who are working on the rest of the stuff are adamant they're right and these systems exist."

Move over Darth Vader.

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