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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: CNN: Arizona Lights Might Have Been Air

From: Stig_Agermose@online.pol.dk (Stig Agermose)
Date: Sat, 26 Jul 1997 01:24:07 +0200
Fwd Date: Sat, 26 Jul 1997 00:37:04 -0400
Subject: Re: CNN: Arizona Lights Might Have Been Air

Found on CNN's site at:
<http://www.cnn.com/US/9707/25/desert.lights.ap/index.html#20>
The video links are in brackets. =20

=20
Arizona lights might have been Air National Guard

July 25, 1997

Web posted at: 1:53 p.m. EDT (1753 GMT)=20

PHOENIX (AP) -- Arizona may have Maryland to thank for those mysterious lights seen over Phoenix in March that gave rise to measureless UFO speculation.=20

And Capt. Eileen Bienz of the Arizona National Guard to thank for finding that out.=20

"I had one too many UFO calls," the Arizona Guard spokeswoman said Thursday. "I said, 'I've got to figure this thing out' is what it finally came down to."=20

Bienz staged a one-person probe after city officials said they could do nothing and the Air Force rejected even Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain's request for investigation.=20

She learned that on March 13, when area authorities were inundated by callers questioning the origin of a boomerang formation of lights over the Phoenix valley, the Maryland Air National Guard was running an exercise called Operation Snowbird along the Barry Goldwater Gunnery Range to the southwest.=20

She also learned that the Maryland force flew eight A-10s and dropped high-intensity flares on the way back to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base at Tucson.=20

Arizona military bases had said they had nothing in the air that would have caused the lights. They found otherwise when, under urging by Bienz, they checked into visiting aircraft.=20

Operation Snowbird brings aircraft from bases in the northern United States into Arizona from November to April.=20

(Amateur video of the lights seen over Phoenix=20
1.2MB/24 sec. Small QuickTime movie
1.7MB/20 sec. Large QuickTime movie)=20

A Davis-Monthan flight schedule shows a squadron of Operation Snowbird planes left at 8:15 p.m. on March 13 and returned at 10:30 p.m.=20

A spokesman for Luke Air Force Base confirmed that the Maryland planes were authorized to use the Goldwater range from 9:30 to 10 that night.=20

According to Village Labs in Tempe, which used reports to create computer simulations of the lights, the lights came to a rest near the Estrella Mountains southwest of Phoenix. There also were reports of huge balls of lights that suddenly disappeared.=20

Bienz said the Snowbird planes don't explain away everything reported that night. They don't match with reports of lights coming in from the north, zooming through Phoenix and showing up again near Kingman.=20

She's trying to find the origin of those as well.=20

But Snowbird planes might account for the lights seen near 10 p.m. in the west, the sightings that provided most of the videotape and photographs.=20

"Our guys did create, while they were up there, an event that this one colonel told me could be perceived as a hell of a light show," said Capt. Drew Sullins of the Maryland Guard.=20

Sullins said the planes were probably in a formation, then peeled off one or two at a time to perform runs during which they would drop high-intensity flares, called Luu-2, made of either magnesium or cesium.=20

The flares are suspended by a tiny parachute, may be visible for over a hundred miles and take a long time to drop, Sullins and others said.=20

When the planes had completed their required runs, they still had a bunch of flares left, and Davis-Monthan doesn't allow planes to land with flares aboard -- so they jettisoned the remaining flares as they left the range.=20

Bienz's discovery left Jim Delitoso of Village Labs at a loss. He said optical analysis of photos and videotapes show the lights couldn't be flares and that a computer simulation matching witness accounts places the lights nowhere near the gunnery range.=20

"I'm open-minded that it could be flares, but we have no evidence of that," Delitoso said.=20

Sullins said the Maryland Air National Guard also is keeping an open mind.=20

"All I'm saying is, yes, we had aircraft flying in that area doing night illuminations," he said. "These guys were flying it. They were there. We can prove it.=20

"Whether people want to believe it was the mysterious lights, it's up to them."=20

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