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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Kenneth Arnold's 'Flying Discs'

From: Donald Ledger <[dledger@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:dledger@ns.sympatico.ca)>  
Date: Mon, 26 Jul 1999 12:53:20 -0300  
Fwd Date: Mon, 26 Jul 1999 21:01:01 -0400  
Subject: Re: Kenneth Arnold's 'Flying Discs'

>Date: Sun, 25 Jul 1999 17:07:57 -0400  
>From: Bruce Maccabee <[brumac@compuserve.com](mailto:brumac@compuserve.com)>  
>Subject: Re: Kenneth Arnold's 'Flying Discs'  
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <[updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)>

>>From: Roger Evans <[moviestuff@cyberjunkie.com](mailto:moviestuff@cyberjunkie.com)>  
>>Date: Sat, 24 Jul 1999 21:35:20 +0000  
>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <[updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)>  
>>Subject: Kenneth Arnold's 'Flying Discs'

<snip>

>Note: this discussion centering on birds, whether pelicans or swans or something else, has been going on for months; a competing explanation put forth by a credible (?) science writer, Keay Davidson, is that Arnold saw a group of meteors.. >So... take your pick. (these are recent explanations,. There >were plenty of earlier ones.)

>>and everyone seems to be dragging Easton over the >>coals about his "Pelican Theory". Granted, his theory only works >>if a specific version of Arnold's story is applied and not all >>versions. Granted, it only works if you fill in the "blanks" >>with some practical logic about what else could account for the >>mystery objects. And it only works if you make some assumptions >>that Arnold was wrong about some of his "facts".>

>And it only works if Easton can prove it with a "map" as defined >in numerous earlier posts.

>>However, considering your statement above, it would appear that >>you are not only being selective about which of Arnold's >>versions is the "truth"; but you are also making an assumption >>that a part of his statement is "incorrect" because it doesn't >>jive with the outcome you'd like to believe. In fact, your own >>theory seems to be that you don't know what the objects were; >>but that they were not, and could not be, Pelicans.

>Yes, I would say they cannot be pelicans (nor meteors, nor >mirages, motes in the eye, orographic clouds, clouds of >billowing snow, reflections from a haze layer, and wave clouds >in motion, nor hoax, nor fast fighter aircraft 6 miles >away.....). Everyone is "selective" in deciding whether to >accept ("believe") in the accuracy of certain values of >quantities or certain descriptions by witnesses. The >descriptions have to be rated on a scale of something like >"probability of being correct" or "which is more likely to be >correct." Now, the Air Force, in 1948-49, decided that Arnold's

>story was so full of holes it wasn't worth analyzing (so why  
>don't we all just accept the Air Force rejection of the sighting  
>and shut up?). Why did they say this? Because the first  
>"analyzer," Dr. J. Allen Hynek, could not accept one of the  
>implications of Arnold's statement, namely that the objects would  
>have been VERY LARGE, hundreds of feet in length, to be seen  
>with any details at a distance of 20 miles or so. Arnold had  
>claimed they were about 50 ft long. Hynek argued that if only 50  
>ft long they would have been too small to see. Conversely, if  
>Arnold could see details of shape of objects 20 miles away they  
>would have to be huge.. (You would have to read my paper on  
>Arnold to get the details.) Hence Hynek decided that the  
>objects probably were about 50 ft long, fast fighter aircraft ,  
>in which case they were not 20 miles away but only 6 miles away,  
>and traveling not 1,200 or 1,700 mph, but about 400 mph. Hence  
>there was a big contradiction between Arnold's size estimate and  
>Hynek's size "estimate" (really a "preferred size") and so the  
>Air Force took this as indication that Arnold's report was so  
>full of contradictions and errors that it didn't merit further  
>attention. Incidentally, the official AF explanation has nothing  
>to do with Hynek's analysis. According to Project Blue Book  
>files Arnold saw a "mirage!" Now there's a rock-solid bit of  
>logic for you.

>Returning to the main discussion, yes, I have chosen to assume  
>his initial distance estimate was wrong. There is no way he  
>could have known exactly how far away they were when he first  
>saw them unless they in some way "interacted with" a landform at  
>a known distance. This is exactly what happened AFTER they flew  
>south of Mt. Rainier, according to Arnold, who reported that  
>they flew "in and out of the mountain peaks" south of Rainier.  
>Obviously Easton has to reject this claim by Arnold if he is to  
>accept pelicans, which couldn't have been more than 2 miles from  
>the Arnold when at their closest (and probably well within a  
>mile.... herein lies the importance of a MAP!).

>>I mean no disrespect, Bruce, but isn't that what everyone is  
>>bitching about Easton doing? I'm not saying that the objects in  
>>question were Pelicans. However, your applied logic seems to  
>>dictate that we should also selectively view some of Arnold's  
>>statements as "wrong" in order to disprove Easton's theory in  
>>favor of your own.

>EVERYONE is "guilty" of picking and choosing the "data"  
>(descriptions)... When it comes to analysis of a UFO sighting  
>we are given the testimony of the witness (no photos, etc. in  
>this case) and we have to make the most of it. Witnesses will  
>sometimes say things that seemingly could not be. I'm not  
>talking about the UFO itself (which : "cannot be" according to  
>conventional thinking). A witness might say he saw a light in a  
>certain direction and you go there and find there is a huge wall  
>of a building that would have blocked the view. What do you do  
>then? Reject the statement, or try to accomodate some modified  
>version? Here Arnold said he saw the objects flying in and out  
>of the mountain peaks...they "swerved in and out of the high  
>mountain peaks.." If Easton is correct, then Arnold said  
>something that could not be true. If Easton is correct, why in  
>the world would Arnold think that the objects had traveled on  
>the opposite side of a mountain peak (or mountain peaks)? But  
>Arnold said it. Is there any reason to doubt Arnold's  
>statement? The only reason offered goes like this : (a) Arnold  
>claimed the objects were at about on his horizon ("I would  
>estimate their elevation could have varies by a thousand feet  
>one way or another up or down, but they were pretty much on the  
>horizon to me which would indicate that they were nea the same  
>elevation to me"..from his letter to the Air Force). Since he  
>believed (Arnold was a believer!) that his plane was at 9,200 ft,  
>he assigned an altitude of 9,500 ft to the objects. However (b)  
>the mountain peaks south of Rainier (which is 14,400 ft high)  
>are lower than about 7,000 ft, and the only peaks which the  
>objects could have disappeared behind are 5-6000 ft high. .  
>Hence (c) Arnold was wrong either in his altitude estimate or  
>in his claim that the objects flew in and out of the mountain  
>peaks.

Hi Bruce,

I snipped the last part of this but for once I'd like to get on  
the record, something that I've mentioned before. This argument  
over Arnold's actual estimate of his altitude and how he arrived

at the height of the mountains. There was no estimate, he looked at his altimeter and saw his altitude. But was the altimeter right?

First though, Bruce is right in bringing up the depression angle to the horizon that pilots flying VFR use as a guide to straight and level, but it is subjective to each pilot and the airplane. You pick a spot on the windscreen or above the panel after you have trimmed to level flight and then see where the horizon is. You use that as a reference and use it most times when you are flying the same aircraft.

Checking your altimeter, vertical speed indicator or your Gyro Horizon will tell you if you are level.

Now about that altimeter. You set your altimeter at the field you are taking off from, usually by bringing up the field altitude. You dial that in. If you look at the inches of mercury scale you will see what your barimetric pressure is. On a standard day that's 29.92 inches of mercury. It's not often that you see that. ONCE you leave that area however, all bets are off, the pressure can change, up or down. Nowadays you can get checks from the nearest airfield by radio and get the "station" pressure for that area. Arnold couldn't do that because he didn't have a radio.

BTW Greg Long, the reason why Arnold didn't have a radio was because he had no electrical power in that machine, not because he was reckless. Contrary to what you used to see in the movies in those days, most light aircraft didn't have radios for three main reasons. 1] No electrics [battery or generator], 2] they were bloody expensive [they still are] and 3] the early radios were very heavy. The radio plus the inverter to go from 12 volts DC to 300 volts+ AC could run as much as 40 pounds. The light aircraft engines of those days and now run off magnetos. You hand propped the early light planes to get them started.

Anyway since Arnold could not check the station altimeter pressure for the Mineral city area say, he had no way of really knowing what his altitude was. It could have been out as much as 1,000+ feet either way.

My last word on that part of the subject.

Thanks

Don Ledger

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