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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

From: Donald Ledger <dledger@ns.sympatico.ca>
Date: Tue, 08 Jun 1999 21:29:44 -0300
Fwd Date: Wed, 09 Jun 1999 17:48:32 -0400
Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

>Date: Mon, 7 Jun 1999 12:47:44 -0400
>From: Bruce Maccabee <brumac@compuserve.com>
>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>

>>From: James Easton <voyager@ukonline.co.uk>
>>To: UFO UpDates <updates@globalserve.net>
>>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes
>>Date: Sat, 5 Jun 1999 04:19:27 +0100

>>Regarding:

>>>Date: Fri, 4 Jun 1999 09:25:15 -0400
>>>From: Bruce Maccabee <brumac@compuserve.com>
>>>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes
>>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>

>>Bruce wrote:

>>>>Date: Wed, 02 Jun 1999 19:51:19 -0500
>>>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>>>>From: Dennis Stacy <dstacy@texas.net>
>>>>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

>>>>Regarding Arnold's first sighting... which has been the
>>>>subject of my discussion... there is no assumption that Arnold
>>>>was "absolutely incapable of human error." Anyone who thinks
>>>>there was such an assumption does not understand the nature of
>>>>the analysis. In fact, the arguments assume that Arnold could
>>>>have been in error in some places.

>>Bruce,

>>Surely it's not debatable whether Kenneth Arnold "could" have
>>been in error in "some" places, that fact is acknowledged and
>>highlighted in your paper - 'The Complete Sighting Report of
>>Kenneth Arnold, with Comments and Analysis'.

>>>But, let's get down to the crux of the matter: which Arnold
>>>statements would you like to reject or modify?>

<snip>

>>Arnold then decided to take this opportunity to 'clock' the
>>airspeed of the 'planes'.

>>It's perhaps crucial to appreciate that Arnold only decided to
>>carry out this exercise because, as he says in the radio
>>interview, "I just thought I'd see how fast they were going,
>>since among pilots we argue about speed so much".

>Crucial? Only? He thought they were jets. Probably
>wondered just how fast the military aircraft could go

>>It wasn't a result of Arnold believing the airplanes were
>>travelling at an incredible speed. He only concluded that after
>>first carrying out a timing between two prominent landmarks and
>>then later calculating how far apart those landmarks were in
>>conjunction with the 'stop watch' reading.
>Wrong. He assumed from the first that they were jets.

>>As he timed the objects' - believed to be airplanes - what then
>>surprised him was a realisation that they didn't have any
>>'tails'.

>>However, as Arnold related, he didn't give either this or the
>>apparently fast airspeed too much thought at the time.>

>It didn't bother him too much while he was flying, even after he
>found a time of only 102 seconds from Rainier to Adams \\
>because, as he wrote to the AF, he knew that the army and air
>forces had fast aircraft.

>>Consequently, he worked out that the distance between the two
>>fixed points was some 50 miles and that if the objects had
>>travelled that distance, as he thought, in the 1 minute and
>>forty seconds recorded, they must have been travelling at an
>>unprecedented speed.
>This was after he landed.

>>If, as you explained in the detailed analysis, Arnold's estimate
>>of the objects' altitude was grossly mistaken and that when he
>>apparently turned his plane around during this timing exercise,
>>we don't know if he changed direction by 90, or 180 degrees, or
>>something else, then consequently, there can be surely be no
>>confidence in his overall perceptions.

>As described above his incorrect estimate of the altitude is
>understandable. This has no bearing on the accuracy of his
>recall in turning the plane. As for the turn itself, if he
>turned to the right he would open the left window near him and
>look out while flying parallel to the objects. Had he turned to
>the right he would have flown away from them.

>No point in turning 180 degrees or 360.

>Makes sense for him to turn to the right, whether unknowns or
>birds. However, if birds he would have realized immediately
>that he was going faster

>>Obviously the closer these 'fluttering' objects actually were,
>>the faster they would appear to travel between two distant fixed
>>points.

>Yes, when flying a "crossing" pattern. And, if Arnold
>initially saw them toward a direction north of Rainier, then by
>the time they got right in front of him (and below) they would
>have been closer.

>>When logic kicks in and we consider that the observation was
>>wholly subjective, has proven misconceptions and that Kenneth
>>Arnold reported a subsequent sighting with similar
>>characteristics and which was almost certainly of birds... at
>>what point does this remotely become sustainable evidence of
>>'alien spacecraft'?

>When logic kicks in and one attempts to formulate a reasonable
>reconstruction based on Arnold (traveling 100 mph or faster at
>9,200 ft) and birds (traveling 50 mph or slower at 5,000 ft)
>one finds it just doesn't work. Arnold would have gotten close
>enough to recognize birds by their shapes and by their lower
>speed and lower altitude.

>Sorry... this pelican has its bellyful.

Bruce James and Dennis,

I'm not going to go over this point by point but just make a few observations.

The first is an obvious disregard for one simple fact and that is the stated Callair altitude that Arnold gave as 9,200 feet. I've brought this up before with James who seems to want to ignore it. The fact is Arnold did not know what his true altitude was because he had no way of verifying it. He looked at his altimeter and saw 9,200 feet and gave that as his altitude. That could have been out as much as two or three thousand feet [don't say it can't happen, it's happened to me] from the station pressure at take-off in the warm lowlands to the cool temps a couple of hundred miles away in the mountains. Note Well that pilots are constantly updating their altimeter settings.

Every time you call a tower or a unicom or some other uncontrolled airfield where someone is manning a radio and has the instruments, they give the local pressure called "station pressure" and the wind speed and direction before they say anything else and you update your altimeter. Now Arnold was without radio and in real wilderness in that area so had no way to update his altimeter. James you can ignore this all you want but it is a fact of life. The chances are that Arnold's altimeter was reading high or low because he was a region of cold heavy air and had come from a warm region where he had originally set his altimeter to the field elevation.

Observation: If Arnold turned his aircraft to get a better look he would have turned [banked] his plane to keep the objects on his side [the left] for better visibility. In this case he would have turned right about 90 degrees. However he probably would have lost sight of the objects for the few seconds it took to accomplish the manouver because his left wing [the Callair is a low wing] would have come up, obscuring his vision.

I've also tried to impress on others the type of skill that Arnold would have had with some 3,000 hours of flying time and the skills and knowledge required to fly in the mountains without killing yourself. The winds around mountains can be vicious and are always unpredictable. You don't just fly through the area, fat dumb and happy and hope the airport shows up in your windscreen after a certain amount of time has passed. The only way you know that you are going to reach your destination before you run out of fuel is by knowing your ground speed and how many gallons your a/c burns per hour at cruise. You find out the former by measuring the distance between two points on your chart and clocking your time to cover that distance. Knowing that will give you your ground speed. I'm not going to go into the other steps such as figuring for the winds/drift and maintaining an accurate heading, but mention this because I've said before that I'll bet that Arnold knew right down to a mile where he was at all times. For him not have known would have been foolhardy at best and suicidal at worst.

I've been a bit put off by the impression being floated, by some, that Arnold was some kind of dolt who was frittering around the mountains with no particular idea of where he was, didn't know birds from jets, couldn't estimate distances or work out a speed/time problem, despite the fact that he would have done them dozens of times during each flight. The pilots back then didn't have the luxury of Loran C or GPS and so had to rely on their piloting and navigation skills.

For your edification it is a lot easier to clock a time over a measured distance by using a stopwatch than it is by the panel clock because you can be more precise, but a panel clock [usually an 8 day windup clock with a sweep second hand] works almost as well. It was his clock and he was used to it. You must remember that Arnold relied on his sense of distance and experience in flying to formulate his estimate of the situation when he saw the UFOs. Don't blow that off so easily. 3,000 hours of flying at 100 MPH is 300,000 miles of distance flown. You can pack in a lot of experience in that time frame.

I believe that it was Bruce that wondered if birds could fly at 6,000 or was it 9,000? feet. My Flight Supplement cautions pilots to watch out for Canada Geese at 32,000 feet when they are migrating. If I remember correctly a DC-3 struck a bird over Mount Everest during WW II while flying the "hump" as they called it.

I don't mean to be snotty but try to remember that Arnold was a highly skilled pilot and not a fool. He had to be a careful and skilled pilot to navigate the type of terrain that he did.

Another observation. We'll probably never know what Arnold saw that day as is true of many other cases, but I think you are drawing a long bow if you stick with your bird theory James.

Don Ledger

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