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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

From: Bruce Maccabee <brumac@compuserve.com>
Date: Wed, 9 Jun 1999 01:10:18 -0400
Fwd Date: Wed, 09 Jun 1999 18:21:02 -0400
Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes

>Date: Sun, 6 Jun 1999 22:01:40 -0400
>From: James Easton <pulsar@compuserve.com>
>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>

>In the 'Pendleton, Oregon East Oregonian, of 26 June, 1947, it's
>reported of Kenneth Arnold that, "He said he could estimate the
>distance of the objects better because an intervening peak once
>blocked his view of them. He found the peak was 25 miles away,
>he related".

>Perhaps we can still clarify further whether it could have
>"blocked his view", or, if it's more likely that he simply lost
>sight of the objects against this intermediate 'peak'.
>It's important if his perception that the objects 'vanished'
>behind a distant peak, was a main reason Arnold believed they
>were some 25 miles distant.>

Thanks for compiling all these statements about object height relative to the mountains and the distance to the objects.

<snip>

>This seems to concur with Bruce Maccabee's assessment:

>"These statements about how they flew with respect to the
>mountain peaks are very important because they provide
>information on the distance from Mr. Arnold. These mountain
>peaks lie along a wide north-south line extending southward from
>Mt. Rainier to Mt. Adams. These peaks were about 20 miles east
>of Arnold at the time. These statements also provide the
>altitude of the objects. To Arnold they appeared to be
>approximately at his altitude because they seemed to be "pretty
>much on the horizon to me." Since he was flying at 9,200 ft,
>this implies that they were close to that altitude. (Arnold
>actually stated his letter that they were at 9,500 ft.) However,
>the mountain peaks south of Rainier generally are 5,000 to 7,000
>ft high, with the higher ones being farther away (more to the
>east) from Arnold. Hence his statement that there were higher
>peaks on the far side of the pathway indicates that the objects
>were definitely lower than about 7,000 ft. Furthermore, he
>stated that they went behind some (or at least one) of the
>lower, closer peaks. Geological survey maps show that mountain
>peaks which the objects could have disappeared behind have
>altitudes of 5,000 to 6,000 ft. Hence it appears that they were
>lower than 6,000 ft and that Arnold overestimated their
>altitude".

>In the early, detailed radio interview, Arnold states, "I could
>see them against the snow, of course, on Mt. Rainier and against
>the snow on Mt. Adams as they were flashing, and against a high
>ridge that happens to lay in between Mt. Rainier and Mt. Adams".

>If the objects were seen against the snow of Mt. Rainier, Mt.
>Adams and a high ridge that was between the mountains, what
>'peaks' could they have gone behind?>

My guess is a few peaks just south of Rainier.

>In a related point, the 'Chicago Daily Tribune', of 25 June,
>quoted Arnold as saying, "I counted nine of them as they
>disappeared behind the peak of Mount Rainier".

I think this is wrong.

>Could the objects have gone behind the mountain, when they were
>also supposed to be travelling across its slopes, e.g., "low
>over the slopes of Mt. Rainier" and "not more than 500 feet over
>the plateau", according to statements attributed to Arnold in
>the 'Oregon Journal' of 27 June?>

>Aside from this earliest 'Chicago Daily Tribune' report, did
>Arnold ever claim the objects "disappeared behind the peak of
>Mount Rainier"?

No.

>Also in that radio interview, Arnold states, "due to the fact
>that I had Mt. Saint Helens and Mt. Adams to clock them by, I
>just thought I'd see just how fast they were going".

>Did Arnold ever mention again that he used Mt. Saint Helens as a
>reference point, or was this probably an error and he meant Mt.
>Rainier?

Perhaps. Or, since he didn't know where they were going, he
may have figured they would pass by Adams or St. Helens (farther
to the west) and he could use whichever was convenient as
reference point.

>In his letter to the Air Force, he claimed, "I watched these
>objects with great interest as I had never before observed
>airplanes flying so close to the mountain tops, flying directly
>south to southeast down the hog's back of a mountain range. I
>would estimate their elevation could have varied a thousand feet
>one way or the other up or down, but they were pretty much on
>the horizon to me which would indicate that they were near the
>same elevation as me. They flew like many times I have observed
>geese to fly in a rather diagonal chain-like line as if they
>were linked together. They seemed to hold a definite direction

>but rather swerved in and out of the high mountain peaks. I
>could quite accurately determine their pathway due to the fact
>that there were several high peaks a little this side of them as
>well as higher peaks on the other side of their pathway".>

>This is a much clearer explanation.

>There were mountain peaks between Arnold and the nine objects
>and further, higher, peaks beyond. The objects flew in-between
>this range of high peaks and ridges.

>However, it seems these features weren't nearly so high as
>Arnold thought and the objects were flying much lower than he
>perceived, something that Arnold never checked.

>In which case, is it agreed Arnold had no idea, not then, not
>ever, that he was observing from what seems to have been some
>4,000, maybe 5,000 feet above the objects?

Unless he looked up the altitudes of the mountains, how would he know yes, he could have measured the altitudes with his airplane, had he thought of it and dared to fly close to them). As I pointed out in my analysis (not reproduced here), Arnold said they appeared to be on his horizon...so he assumed they were at his altitude. However, if they were 20 miles away, as Arnold thought, they could have been 4000 ft lower and still be "on his horizon", specifically, at a depression angle of only 2 degrees, so small it is lost in th "noise."

>If it's argued that this *couldn't* have directly affected his
>subsequent judgement of distances between himself and the
>objects, plus where they were flying in relation to the peaks,
>what is the basis of that argument?

It is so argued... because of his statement that they were going in and out of the mountain peaks. He wouldn't have to know the altitudes of th peaks in order to observe that some were in front of and others behind the objects (2 degree depression angle, remember?)

>The Pendleton newspaper article also states, "The Boise flyer
>said they flew on the west sides of Rainier and Adams, adding
>that he believed this would make it more difficult for them to
>be seen from the ground".

>Is this 'west side story' of any relevance in understanding the
>overall perspective?

More forest on the west side?

.....

PELICANS
For Pelican Partisans Only:

Let's forget the claim of going in and out of the mountains for the moment and simply concentrate on the directions to the objects (a) when first seen, (b) when passing Mt. Rainier, (c) when in the direction of Mt. Adams.

Assume Arnold was close to Mineral, Washington, about 25 miles radially from Rainier; more specifically, 23 miles west and 10 miles south of Rainier.

OK, get yourself some graph paper with 1" squares (or larger) and let 1" = a mile (or some other convenient square size on the graph paper).

At the left side of the paper near the middle place a point. That is Arnold's starting position. Let north be "up" on the graph paper. Draw a line from Arnold's starting position at a azimuth of 15 degrees. This is approximately the direction to Mt. Baker.

Draw another line with azimuth 23 degrees. This is the direction to Mt. Rainier (about 25 miles away.... it will not appear on your graph paper unless you have BIG paper or squares smaller than 1"). Draw another line at azimuth 95 deg. This is Arnold's track toward Yakima. Draw a final line at azimuth 136 deg. This is the direction to Mt. Adams over 50 miles away. Now let's construct a diagram of ARNOLD vs the PELICANS.

The bird explanation was discussed at length last fall (Nov. and Dec) and then it dropped out of sight. Although I attempted a reconstruction such as presented here way back then, I was missing a key piece of data about PELICANS.... a piece which has now been supplied by Mr. Easton (I believe he could have supplied it last fall, but didn't). We knew back then that Pelicans could achieve a top speed of 50 mph (more likely to be 20-30, however). What we know now is that the upper limit of altitude as suggested by the ornithologists and glider pilots is 6,000 ft (more likely under 3,000). So let's characterize Pelicans this way: wingspan - 10 ft length - 3 ft (? a bit much?) TOP speed - 50 mph or 0.83 miles/min or 73 ft/sec TOP altitude - 6,000 ft. Flight Direction: 170 azimuth (could be 180 or 160...won't make much difference to this disaster)

Let us charactersize Arnold by altitude - 9,200 ft speed - 100 mph or 1.67 mi/min or 147 ft/sec

Note that this estimate of Arnold's speed is probably low. We also characterize this reconstruction by the overall time of the observation. arnold said 2.5 - 3 minutes. Let's pick 2.5 (as being advantageous to the P hypothesis) In that time birds fly $2.5 \times .83 = 2.1$ miles In that time Arnold flies 4.2 mi

Now go to your finely executed graph paper with the radial lines emanating from Arnold's starting position and follow me. Mark 2 miles along the 15 deg azimuth radial. This is the assumed initial distance of the pelicans. At this distance they would appear as dots against the sky...or mountainous background (Ignore observation by of arnold about metallic-like bright flashes).

What do we find at the START of the sighting?

-angular size (birds seen nearly head on, flying south) , 2 miles horizontally, 3200 ft down, radial distance = 2.1 miles, angular size = $\arctan(10 \text{ ft}/2.1 \text{ miles}) = 0.9 \text{ mr} = 0.052 \text{ degrees}$ (mr = milliradians)... detectable -depression angle is $\arctan([9200-6000]/2 \times 5280) = 17 \text{ degrees}$ (not exactly "on the horizon"; 17 degrees down should be noticeable, whereas 2 degrees would be "lost in the noise." Therefore ignore arnold's claim about the objects being on his horizon....)

Now draw a line from this initial bird position along the 170 azimuth direction. Make the line 2.1 miles long, the distance the birds flew during the sighting and see where it ends.

Amusing.

On my diagram it ends right on Arnold's path. But by this time Arnold would be 4.2 miles along his path, about 0.8 miles from where he started, and the pelicans would be about 3 miles behind him. This means that at all times they would have been to his left and the sighting line to them would rotate to the left and behind.

Please keep in mind that this is a DYNAMIC situation: Arnold and the pelicans are moving. If one is clever one can find a point of closest approach by marking off time intervals and measuring the distance between th plane and birds at the various interval positions. Try 15 second intervals.. At APPROXIMATELY 45 seconds after the start.Arnold has already crossed the path of the oncoming pelicans but they are still about 1.5 miles north of his track. Arnold would be looking back to his left at about 25 degrees west of north or 120 to the left of his heading direction. The depression angle at this time would be about 22 degrees, considerably below the horizon. The angular size would be about 50% greater than the initial value ... probably wings would be distinguished.

At any rate, one can hardly imagine Arnold describing this situation as saying that the "saucers" flew down the hogback chain of mountains toward Mt. Adams. So, to solve this problem, ignore arnold's claim that the objects flew over the mountains south of Rainier and ignore his claim that they were last seen in the direction of Mt. Adams... Now you can accept the Pelicans. Right?

If Arnold turned his plane under these circumstances it would have been a turn to the left and he would have been flying

northward, opposite to their direction.

Now, as alternatives one could assume various initial distances of the pelicans from Arnold's starting position, e.g., instead of 2 miles along the 15 degree azimuth direction, try 1 mile, or 1/2 mile. go ahead. Try it. See what you get.

OR, try something more "realistic." Assume Arnold was wrong in saying he first saw the objects north of Rainier. Ignore this observation of arnold. Instead, assume he first saw them in the direction of Rainier. So, mark off 2 miles along the 63 degree azimuth.

Now mark 15 second intervals of 0.21 miles along the 170 degree azimuth flight path southward of the pelicans. Also mark 15 second intervals of 0.42 miles along Arnold's path. You will find, oddly enough, that the flight paths nearly cross in 5 intervals, i.e., 1 min, 15 seconds. Arnold has gone 2.1 miles and the birds have gone 1.04 miles from their respective starting points. At this time the pelicans are roughly 0.1 miles = 528 ft north of Arnold and at an angle of about 105 deg to the left of his heading. The radial distance is now $(528^2 + 3,200^2)^{0.5} = 3243$ ft. The angular size of 10 ft wingspan is 3 milliradians... easy to resolve wings. The depression angle is $\arctan(3200/528) = 81$ degrees. Arnold is looking almost straight down at the birds. After this the birds would b behind Arnold, and below.

Ignore arnold's claim that the he saw the objects in the direction of the chain of mountains south of Rainier AND ignore his claim that he last saw them in the direction of Mt. Adams. After proper ignoring, pelicans are definitely in the running.

One can, of course, play with the reconstruction a bit. If the initial pelican distance is pushed farther away the pelicans stay to north of Arnold's flight path during most or all of the sighting. This decreases the depression angles somewhat, but never do the pelicans appear to be south of Mt. Rainier

If the initial pelican distance is decreased, to say 1 mile, then Arnold passes their flight track in about 30 seconds, about 15 seconds ahead of them. The depression angles are large all the time.

Anyway, I invite Pelican Partisans to invent their own reconstructions and prove that the objects could have been pelicans. Please be specific as to which of Arnold's sighting details we no longer need to accept as accurate in order to accept the pelican hypothesis as accurate.

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