

Earth



Aliens On Earth.com

Resources for those who are stranded here

Earth



[UFOs](#) | [Paranormal](#) | [Area 51](#)
[People](#) | [Places](#) | [Random](#)
[Top 100](#) | [What's New](#)
[Catalog](#) | [New Books](#)

Search... for keyword(s)

in Page Titles

Our Bookstore
is [OPEN](#)

[Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1999](#) -> [Jun](#) -> Here

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Kenneth Arnold's Sighting [was: Re: Voyager

From: James Easton <pulsar@compuserve.com>
Date: Thu, 10 Jun 1999 21:47:16 -0400
Fwd Date: Fri, 11 Jun 1999 15:25:25 -0400
Subject: Re: Kenneth Arnold's Sighting [was: Re: Voyager

Regarding:

>Date: Wed, 9 Jun 1999 01:10:18 -0400
>From: Bruce Maccabee <brumac@compuserve.com>
>Subject: Re: Voyager Newsletter, Mogul Parchment Parachutes
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>

[I've changed the heading to something more meaningful]

Bruce wrote:

>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.

Bruce,

That's ideal and thank you for the overall assessment.

Before going further with this, there are a few questions I would like to have resolved.

In your 'Complete Sighting...' report, you refer to the following extract from Arnold's letter to the Air Force:

"There was a DC-4 to the left and to the rear of me approximately fifteen miles distance, and I should judge, at 14,000 ft. elevation".

"I knew they [the objects] must be very large to observe their shape at that distance, even on as clear a day as it was that Tuesday. In fact I compared a zeus fastener or cowling tool I had in my pocket - holding it up on them and holding it up on the DC- 4 - that I could observe at quite a distance to my left, and they seemed smaller than the DC-4; but I should judge their span would have been as wide as the furthest engines on each side of the DC-4".

You then comment:

"Arnold provided an estimate of size in an indirect way: he stated that they appeared to be comparable to the spacing of the engines on a DC-4 (4 engine propeller driven, 117 ft wingspan, 94 ft length, 27 ft height) which he had seen at a distance which he estimated as 15 miles. He estimated the engine spacing to be 45 - 50 ft, although 60 ft would have been a better estimate. By this means he was essentially providing an angular size for the objects: the equivalent of about 60 ft at 15 miles. He reported the size of the objects as 45 - 50 ft by comparison with the

airplane as if the plane had been at the same distance as the objects. However, the plane was not at the same distance, so a correction for the distance difference is necessary.

It is possible to make an estimate of the size of the objects assuming his estimate of the distance to the DC-4, 15 miles, was (approximately) correct. (Here comes some math and geometry, so if you are squeamish about such subjects, skip over the next four sentences.) Using the outer engine spacing as 60 ft, the angular size at his estimated distance is $60/(15 \times 5280) = 0.00076$ radians or about 2.6 minutes of arc (1 degree = 60 minutes = 0.0174 radians). Projecting this angle to 20 miles, the rough distance of the objects, would yield a size of about $(20 \times 5280 \times 0.00076 =)$ 80 ft. Had he overestimated the distance to the DC-4 (if it had been less than 15 miles away) the calculated angular size, and hence the calculated object size would increase. If he underestimated the distance to the DC-4, then the calculated size would decrease. My own suspicion is that he overestimated the distance and that therefore the objects were larger than 80 ft in length. Unfortunately no investigator pursued this size estimate at the time and with Arnold's death many years ago it is no longer possible to improve the size estimate".

In your paper, 'Still in Default' - 'Originally Published in the Proceedings of the 1986 MUFON International Symposium. Updates to 1998 in square parentheses', you wrote:

[Note: a very complete analysis of Arnold's sighting has been published in the Proceedings of the International Conference of the Mutual UFO Network, 1997. In that much longer paper I point out that Arnold compared the apparent size of the UFO to the spacing between engines on DC-4 aircraft - 117ft wingspan, 94 ft long, 23 ft fuselage height - which he thought was about 15 miles away.

The point is that since Arnold could see the engines on the aircraft at 15 miles - or even if it was only at 10 miles - then he had better than average visual acuity.

Since the engines were about 60 ft apart and since the UFOs were farther away than the airplane the estimated size of the UFOs would be 80 - 120 feet.))
[End]

When considering all the probabilities, should your above point be taken into account?

Is it being accepted that Arnold claims to have seen the DC-4s engines at 15 miles, i.e., sufficiently that he could use this observation in a rough calculation?

If the DC-4 was 15 miles distant as Arnold claimed, how do we quantify "better than average visual acuity" then; would it be above average, exceptional or incredible?

In his letter to the Air Force, Arnold also wrote:

"I observed the chain of these objects passing another snow-covered ridge in between Mt. Rainier and Mt. Adams, and as the first one was passing the south crest of this ridge the last object was entering the northern crest of the ridge. As I was flying in the direction of this particular ridge, I measured it and found it to be approximately five miles so I could safely assume that the chain of these saucer like objects were at least five miles long".

You have referenced this 'five mile' chain in the 'Complete Sighting...' paper, i.e., "Since the length of the 'chain' of objects was about 5 miles (paragraph H [as] above), the leading object was about 5 miles south of Mt. Adams when the last object passed Mt. Adams".

What Arnold doesn't explain here is that he DID NOT measure this ridge at the time.

At least according to the details in his book, when he writes, "Between Mount Rainier and Mount Adams there is a very high plateau with quite definite north and south edges. Part of this

chain-like formation traveled above this plateau towards Mount Adams, while part of the formation actually dipped below the near edge. As the first unit of these craft cleared the southernmost edge of this background, the last of the formation was just entering the northern ridge.

I later flew over this plateau in my plane and came to a close approximation that this whole formation of craft, whatever they were, formed a chain in the neighbourhood of five miles long".

So, the 'five miles' estimate wasn't in fact made until later, quite different from the impression given in his Air force letter.

Would you agree that seems to be correct?

Although it maybe doesn't matter, I'm puzzled by his references to using a watch and then confirming that he didn't. i.e.:

Chicago Daily Tribune, June 25 - "Their speed was apparently so great I decided to clock them. I took out my watch and checked off one minutes and 42 seconds from the time they passed Mount Rainier until they reached the peak of Mount Adams. All told the objects remained in view slightly less than two minutes from the time I first noticed them."

Radio interview - "Well, uh, I uh, it was about one minute to three when I started clocking them on my sweep second hand clock".

"But when I observed the tail end of the last one passing Mt. Adams, and I was at an angle near Mt. Rainier from it, but I looked at my watch and it showed one minute and 42 seconds".

Norman, Oklahoma Transcript, June 26 - "I figure they were moving about 1,200 miles per hour"... "because I clocked them with a stop watch during the time it took them to fly from Mount Rainer to Mount Adams".

'The Coming of the Saucers' - "I remember distinctly that my sweep second hand on my eight day clock, which is located on the instrument panel, read one minute to 3 PM as the first object of this formation passed the southern edge of Mt. Rainier".

"Now, clocking speeds by only your sweep second hand cannot be entirely accurate because several seconds could be lost in breaking your gaze to observe your clock".

"I never thought of checking this with my wristwatch".
[End]

Anyway, a most striking discrepancy is the following.

>From your 'Complete Sighting...' paper:

"According to Mr. Arnold, at 2:00 PM, June 24, 1947 he took off from Chehalis, in the state of Washington, in his small plane after completing a business trip (he sold and installed fire fighting equipment). He planned to spend about an hour searching for a lost C-46 Marine transport plane that had crashed in the mountains west-southwest of Mt. Rainier. (There was a \$5,000 reward for finding the plane.) After searching for about an hour and not finding anything he turned east toward his next destination, Yakima, Washington. He was near Mineral, Washington, about 22 miles west-southwest of Mt. Rainier and Yakima was about 80 miles ahead of him along a flight path that would take him just about 12 miles south of peak of Mt. Rainier. He leveled out onto his new flight path he was at approximately a 9,200 ft altitude. His sighting began within a minute or two of the turn".

Therefore:

- a) Arnold had spent 'about an hour' searching for the C-46 Marine transport plane
- b) he gave up and turned east towards Yakima
- c) his sighting began a couple of minutes later when he was flying due east.

Yet, according to Arnold's account in his book:

a) "It was during this search and while making a turn of 180 degrees over Mineral, Washington", that he first noticed the objects. It wasn't when he was flying due east towards Yakima.

b) After the sighting, he claims, "I tried to focus my mind on a continued search for the downed C-46 which had crashed some months earlier". It was only then he decided to abandon the search and instead head for Yakima.

This is substantiated by his detailed radio interview, in which he states:

"Well, about 2:15 I took off from Chehalis, Washington, en route to Yakima, and, of course, every time that any of us fly over the country near Mt. Rainier, we spend an hour or two in search of the Marine plane that's never been found that they believe is in the snow someplace southwest of that particular area. That area is located at about, it's elevation is about 10,000 foot, and I had made one sweep in close to Mt. Rainier and down one of the canyons and was dragging it for any types of objects that might prove to be the Marine ship, uh, and as I come out of the canyon there, was about 15 minutes, I was approximately 25 to 28 miles from Mt. Rainier, I climbed back up to 9200 feet and I noticed to the left of me a chain which looked to me like the tail of a Chinese kite, kind of weaving and going at a terrific speed across the face of Mt. Rainier".

According to this, he had spent some 15 minutes searching for the C-46?

If he left Chehalis about 2:15, not 2:00 as you noted, how long would it have approx. taken him to reach Mt Rainier and begin his search?

How do you equate the account given in that radio interview with the story told in the Air force letter, i.e.:

"The air was so smooth that day that it was a real pleasure flying and, as most pilots do, when the air is smooth and they are flying at a higher altitude, I trimmed out my airplane in the direction of Yakima, which was almost directly east of my position and simply sat in my plane observing the sky and terrain. There was a DC-4 to the left and to the rear of me approximately fifteen miles distance, and I should judge, at 14,000 ft. elevation".

"The sky and air was as clear as crystal. I hadn't flown more than two or three minutes on my course when a bright flash light reflected on my airplane. It startled me as I thought I was too close to some other aircraft".

No longer did Arnold's observation originate when he was coming up from the canyon (does he mention the C-46 search at all in that letter?), now, he was coasting along at a steady pace, with not a care in the world.

I trust you will accept there are significant anomalies highlighted here and they have to be addressed first, before looking at any theoretical maths.

I note that Arnold says in his book, "I was flying a specially designed mountain airplane".

Do we know what the modifications were?

If I recall, it was a three (maybe four) seater plane. If there were two seats in the front, which window, left or right, would be nearest to the pilot?

James.
E-mail: voyager@ukonline.co.uk

[[Next Message](#) | [Previous Message](#) | [This Day's Messages](#)]
[[This Month's Index](#) | [UFO UpDates Main Index](#) | [MUFON Ontario](#)]

UFO UpDates - Toronto - updates@globalserve.net

Operated by Errol Bruce-Knapp - ++ 416-696-0304

A Hand-Operated E-Mail Subscription Service for the Study of UFO Related Phenomena.

To subscribe please send your first and last name to updates@globalserve.net

Message submissions should be sent to the same address.

[[UFO Topics](#) | [People](#) | [Ufomind What's New](#) | [Ufomind Top Level](#)]

To find this message again in the future...

Link it to the appropriate [Ufologist](#) or [UFO Topic](#) page.

Archived as a public service by [Area 51 Research Center](#) which is not responsible for content.

Software by Glenn Campbell. Technical contact: webmaster@ufomind.com

Financial support for this web server is provided by the [Research Center Catalog](#).