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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Swissair Liner's CE With 'UFO' Off NYC '97

From: Donald Ledger <dledger@ns.sympatico.ca>
Date: Sat, 06 Mar 1999 12:53:34 -0300
Fwd Date: Sat, 06 Mar 1999 15:14:13 -0500
Subject: Re: Swissair Liner's CE With 'UFO' Off NYC '97

>Date: Fri, 05 Mar 1999 22:40:48 +0100
>From: Gerhard Eickenhorst <ehs@datacomm.ch>
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>Subject: Re: Swissair Liner's CE With 'UFO' Off NYC '97

>>From: Ignatious Graffeo <Ufoseek@aol.com>
>>Date: Fri, 5 Mar 1999 08:16:25 EST
>>To: Updates@globalserve.net
>>Subject: Swissair Liner's CE With 'UFO' Off NYC '97

>>Swissair-UFO, 1st Writethru

>><http://www.cbcnews.cbc.ca:80/news/cp/world/990304/w030450.html>

>>STEPHEN THORNE

>>OTTAWA (CP) - A Swissair pilot reported his 737 jet was nearly
>>hit by an unidentified flying object, possibly a missile, near
>>the area off New York where a TWA airplane crashed in 1996, The
>>Canadian Press has learned.

>Hello from Switzerland,

>Swissair has or never had 737 planes. As a formal Swissair
>technician I think I should tell you. I think Stephen Thorne was
>thinking of a 747.

>>Swissair Flight 127 was cruising at 23,000 feet on Aug. 9, 1997,
>>when the pilot interrupted an address to passengers to report
>>the near miss by a round white object, says a report by the U.S.
>>National Transportation Safety Board.

>
>Cheers,
>Gerhard

Gerhard is right. The aircraft in question was a 747-300. This incident was looked into a couple of years ago by many on the List. Below is a tower transcript supplied in its entirety, at the time, by Bill Weitzel. Following that is the FAA's explanation of the event as forwarded by Kenny Young at the time. Sorry for the length.

Don Ledger

This portion of the re-recording concerns communications at the

Danbury Center, Sector #20, Radar Associate Position, during the time period 2102 C.U.T., to 2119 C.U.T., on August 9th, 1997.

C: --- 35 20 contact Boston Center 1 3 3 point 4 2
P: 1 3 3 4 2 ... 35 20
C: Air Shuttle 52 95, contact Boston Center 1 3 3 point 4 2
P: 3 4 2
P: Good afternoon, Boston Center, Eagle Flight 934 1 3 ...
C: Eagle Flight 934, Boston Center ... altimeter is 3 0 1 1
... acknowledge
P: Acknowledge 934 thanks
P: Eagle Flight 935 ... 1 7 17
C: Eagle Flight 935 Boston Center climber maintain ... 2 1 0
P: 2 1 0 Eagle Flight 935
P: Boston Blue Ridge 521 leaving 14,500 for 1 2000
C: Blue Ridge 521 Boston Center ... 7 0 3 0 1 1
P: 3 0 1 1 Blue Ridge, uh, 521
C: Eagle Flight 935 contact Boston Center 1 2 5 point 5 7
P: 25 57 Eagle Flight 935
P: Afternoon, Boston, Delta 1840 ... 14 5, for 1 7000
C: Delta 1840 Boston Center ... maintain ... 2 1 0 ... direct
Providence westward unchanged.
P: 2 1 0 direct Providence and thank you, Delta 1840
(4 phone tones, rings once, pause, same 4 tones, ring)
C: Maintain 1 1000
P: (faint voice) ... 1 1000 ...
P: Boston, good afternoon, Swissair 127 heading(?) 2 3 0
C: Swissair 127 heading(?), Boston Center, good afternoon, this
verify you have the ... 2 arrivals, Boston
P: ...
C: Roger
C: Blue Ridge 521 contact Bradley approach 1 2 5 point 8
P: 2 5 8 approach 521
P: ... Center, is Swissair 127
C: Swissair 127, go ahead
P: Uh, yes sir, I don't know what it was, but, it was-- it, it
just overflow, like, like a couple of hundred feet above us,
/(another voice)/ I don't know if it was a rocket or
whatever, but incredibly fast, uh, opposite direction.
C: In the opposite direction?
P: Yes sir, and the time was, was-- 2107. It was, it was too
fast to be an aeroplane.
C: OK. Thank you.
V2: Danbury Con... 31
(beep)
V2: Danbury--
V3: Uh, hi there, USAir 8900, uh, 300 knots greater assign,
Northwest 550 not to exceed 300 knots.
V2: OK
(2 voices) normal speed
(beep)
C: USAir 986 Boston Center ... maintain flight over 1 8 0
P: ... 1 8 0, yes sir, 986
C: USAir 986, you see anything, uh, like a missile in your
area, perhaps off to your right?
P: Take a good look, but I don't think, if it's goin' that
fast, I probably won't get a chance. We just saw Swissair
go by a moment ago.
C: OK. Thanks. Eagle Flight 934, contact Boston Center 1 3 3
point 4 2.
P: 33 42, we'll see ya 934
P: And, uh, Swissair 127, we had no T-CAS warning, it was, it
was way too fast, I guess.
C: Swiss 127, thank you.
P: ... (overlap)
(beep)
V1: Kennedy, uh, Danbury 30
V2: Yes
V1: Hey, d'you see now that Swissair, about, uh, 2-1/2 minutes
ago, said, uh, somethin' like a rocket or somethin' went
over, a couple hundred feet over him, opposite direction,
goin' too fast to be a plane.
V2: Whoa! Alrighty!
V3: How far above him was it?
V2: OK!
V1: Wonder how much, I--
V1: He said 2, 3, 400 feet above him, was the thing.
(beep)
P: Yeah, all I can tell, uh, 127, is that the three of us saw
a, a white, uh, object, uh, it was white, and very fast.
C: Swissair 127, thank you.

C: Delta 1840 contact Boston Center 1 3 3 point 4 2.
P: 33 42, Delta 1840.
C: USAir 986 turn left heading 0 2 0 joining victor 487 north
of Bridgeport.
P: USAir ... join up ... victor 487 ... USAir 986.
C: Swissair 127 clear direct Providence west route unchanged
P: (muffled) Providence... Swissair 127
C: Swissair 127, reduce speed to 3 0 0, now, uh, next sector's
request.
P: OK, seems like, 300 with uh, 127.
C: Swissair 127, contact Boston Center 1 3 3 point 4 2.
P: 3 3 42, have a good night.
C: Thanks
P: (muffled)
C: That's 2 at once.... USAir 8900,.. 2 4 0
P: USAir 8900
C: USAir 8900, Boston Center, roger, who else called?
P: And, Northwest 550 at, uh, 2 4 0.
C: Northwest 550, Boston Center, roger.
C: Northwest 550, did you see anything, uh, similar to a
missile, or a UFO, /another voice/ uh, in your vicinity?
Maybe, uh, about 3 minutes ago?

P: I was just getting ready to ask you if you heard that
report, uh, we haven't seen anything. Northwest 550.
C: OK. USAir 8900, er, you didn't see anything either?
P: We saw nothing. 8900.
C: OK.

----- (There's no more about the object on the tape. --WBW)

Subject: NTSB Report on SWISS-AIR incident from Aug. 9, 97
Date: Thu, 12 Mar 1998 10:13:29 -0800
From: Kenny Young <task@FUSE.NET>
To: CURRENT-ENCOUNTERS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

This is the NTSB report on the August 9, 1997 Swiss-Air incident
in which the pilots reported a suspected UFO. This report was
just recently posted on the NTSB Aviation Accident statistics
web page.

NTSB Identification: NYC97SA193. The docket is stored in the
(offline) NTSB Imaging System.

Scheduled 14 CFR 129 operation of SWISSAIR TRANSPORT CO. LTD
(D.B.A. SWISSAIR)

Incident occurred AUG-09-97 at NEW YORK, NY
Aircraft: Boeing 747-300, registration: HBIGF
Injuries: 3 Uninjured.

On August 9, 1997, about 1707 eastern daylight time, the flight
crew of a Boeing 747-300, Swiss registration HB-IGF, and
operated by Swissair as flight 127, reported an unusual sighting
while in cruise flight at 23,000 feet (FL230) over New York, New
York.

The airplane was not damaged, and there were no injuries to the
occupants. Flight 127 which had departed from Philadelphia
International Airport, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was conducted
under 14 CFR Part 129, and was operated in visual meteorological
conditions on an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan.
Flight 127 was en-route to Boston, Massachusetts when the
sighting was made.

According to a report from a Safety Board Air Traffic Control
investigator:

"Swiss Air 127 was in contact with the Danbury Sector of the
Boston ARTCC at Flight Level 230. Voice communications with
Swiss Air 127 were of a routine nature until 2107 UTC, when the
flight transmitted, '...sir, I don't know what it was, but it
just over flew like a couple of hundred feet above us. I don't
know if it was a rocket or whatever, but incredibly fast,
opposite direction.'

The controller asked, 'In the opposite direction?' Swiss Air 127
replied, 'yes sir, and the time was 2107, it was too fast to be

an airplane.'

The controller then asked another flight, Eastern 986 if they saw anything like a missile in the area, 'perhaps off your right.'

They replied that they would take a good look, but 'didn't think that if it's going that fast they probably won't get a chance. They had just seen Swiss Air go by a little bit ago.' "

"Swiss Air 127 then reported that they had no warning, & that the object was going way too fast. The controller then asked how far above Swiss Air 127 it was. Swiss Air 127 replied, 'it was right over us, right above, opposite direction, and, and I don't know, 2,3,4 hundred feet above. All that I can tell, 127, is that the three of us saw a light object, it was white, and very fast.'"

"The flight was then cleared direct to Providence, and told to reduce speed to 300 knots before contacting the next sector."

Interviews were conducted with the captain and first officer on August 10, 1997. The flight engineer had not observed the object and was not interviewed. The captain reported:

The flight was abeam of John F. Kennedy Airport, Jamaica, New York, at 2106, and proceeding direct to RAALF intersection when the event occurred.

The captain was making a public address to the passengers in the cabin when he looked ahead and saw a white object.

He saw it for less than a second, and the only movement he could discern was opposite his flight track. He did not observe any wings, and was not sure it was an aircraft. He thought it was cylindrical in shape. He had never been so close to other traffic before. He was not certain whether it was stationary or was moving opposite of the flight. It passed over the cockpit, slightly right of centerline. If it had been any lower, it would have hit the aircraft.

As the object passed by, there was no noise, no wake turbulence, and no disruption or anomalies with any of the flight or engine instruments.

At the time of the event, the airplane was flying on a heading of 060 degrees, at 340 KIAS, at FL230. It was clear with cumulus nimbus clouds to the west. The sun was behind them. There was no TCAS warning.

In addition, there was no exhaust or smoke, no fire, and he could not accurately discern its size. The captain reported his total time as 15,000 + flight hours. He had never seen a missile in flight.

The first officer reported: The flight was cruising at FL230. The captain was making a PA to the cabin. The first officer was putting on his headset, and bent over to adjust the volume. As he looked up he saw the object. It passed overhead very quickly. It was close enough that he ducked his head because he thought it would hit them. He said it was white and had a round shape. There was no smoke or fire visible from the object.

He thought it passed about 100 to 200 feet above the airplane and between the right side of the fuselage and the number 3 engine.

There was no drift, and it appeared to be flying exactly opposite of the aircraft. No actual movement was discerned, and no markings were visible.

The object appeared to be the size of a thumbnail held at an arms length. The engine indications were steady, and the visibility was unlimited. The sun was behind the airplane.

The first officer reported that he had previously encountered a weather balloon over Italy, and the object did not look like the balloon.

The first officer reported his total time as 7,500 hours, all civil. He has seen missile shoots from the ground.

A check with a Safety Board meteorologist revealed the following:

WEATHER BALLOONS

- * Weather balloons are launched twice a day.
- * The normal times are 1100 UTC, and 2300 UTC. plus or minus 15 minutes.
- * The time to reach 23,000 feet is normally about 25 to 28 minutes. Sounding balloons are light tan or brownish in color.
- * PIBAL (used for wind observations) and Ceiling Balloons are black and red in color.
- * The closest launch point to the JFK was Upton, New York, about 43 NM east of JFK on a bearing of 085 magnetic.

A check of winds aloft data from Upton, New York, revealed the following:

Date Time Altitude Velocity Direction Temperature
9 Aug 12Z 500 MB 35 kts 350 degrees -14 C
10 Aug 12Z 500 MB 15 kts 360 degrees -12 C
9 Aug 00Z 400 MB 20 kts 330 degrees -22 C
10 Aug 00Z 400 MB 20 kts 330 degrees -22 C
Radar data was supplied by the Boston Air Traffic Control Center (ARTCC), in the NTAP format.

The data contained both secondary targets (beacon), and primary targets (non-beacon).

The data was plotted and Swissair Flight 127 was identified.

There was no evidence of an opposite direction target, either beacon or non-beacon.

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