National UFO Reporting Center

Sighting Report

Occurred : 6/25/1966 21:30 (Entered as : 06/25/1966 21:30)
Reported: 4/10/2004 6:11:39 AM 06:11
Posted: 4/26/2004
Location: Rapid City, SD
Shape: Disk
Duration:several hours
UFOs visited our Minuteman ICBMS during the summer of 1966 and I was there.

Another old sighting. I was a System Analyst for SAC in the early 1960 and stationed at Ellsworth AFB, SD. I held the nation's highest security clearances, daily handled nuclear weapons and carried launch codes and keys. I thus took no drugs, was a tea toddler and have never hallucinated in my life. I was on active duty at the time.

This was early summer 1966. I was on base during the evening, when excited reports of UFOs on our silos were being passed around in the living quarters among the men person to person. "Excited utterances," they are called in legal jargon. I went down to Job Control, which tracked the 150 missiles and the ten Launch Control Centers. These Centers were manned, twenty-four seven, while the missiles are unmanned.

That evening, in Hotel Flight, as I recall, we had an "outer zone security violation," meaning that something had passed over the silo....this is often blowing vegetation or a light footed animal. The system will generally reset with the manual override.

However this silo did not reset.

Worse it was soon followed by an "inter zone violation," meaning that something large enough to set off the vibration sensors or to touch the combinations locks, etc., was on the site.

When the violations happen in this order, the manual calls for a "strike team" to be dispatched from the LCC's above ground facility, which would be between ten and twenty miles distant. These teams generally consisted of two Air Policeman with automatic weapons.

These men having no training in the weapon system, no clearances and are the worst educated airmen on active duty. However they are in constant radio contract with their dispatcher and through them with the MCCCs in the LCC, a hundred feet or so below ground and via patch with Job Control back on the base, about 100 miles, in this case to the WSW.

These men reported seeing a "fly saucer" on the silo cover, inside the silo and smaller objects around it, that appeared to be lights "floating" in the air. The larger saucer was sitting on the silo door, a massive 30 ton concret "hatch," on a short rail track. It was thus well inside the fence and entirely unauthorized.

As this was an armed and targeted missile, aimed at the Soviet Union, this flagrant breach of security was taken very seriously by all concerned.

Minutes after these objects were spotted, the call came excitedly to our quarters, so I arrived within thirty minutes of the initial OZ security violation. I actually arrived before the AP s arrived at the silo in question.

By the time of my arrival, at JC, the JC Commander had taken it upon himself to send the nearest team, then at work on the missiles. This team turned out to be about thirty or forty minutes away.

Now this was entirely "out of the book." No open silo, as the one left was, was ever to be left without authorized personnel on it, since it would be launched.

Nevertheless, the need to have a qualified observer at the site being probed by the UFOs, obviously overrode the Technical Orders of Operation.

So the EMT team, that was nearby, was dispatched from their silo, which was under going some form of routine maintenance . I believe this was an EMT team consisting of two Analysts and an Air Policeman.

A Command decision, backed by SAC in Offitt AFB, lay behind this unusual order.

Thus one AP and one Analyst were sent to the silo in question, leaving the open silo (and its deadly missile, in the hands of one man, hence the security breach).

I remember not only overhearing the radio conversation as these Airmen approached the silo, a conversation that confirmed what the other AP s had seen, "holly shit, there is a fuckin saucer on that silo..." but I talked with this man, a day or so later, myself. He had been ordered to say nothing to anyone about what he saw. But did confirm these orders and the facts as I knew them to be. An Analyst, he, like me had spent an year in technical school, so we were close.

During this same period, our helicopters were roused and dispatched. Arriving as the UFO was rising up out of the silo. They gave chase, but were unable to close, as the objects accelerated towards the NNE.

The sightings continued for about a week with the same pattern. First an Outer Zone beach and then an Inter Zone.

We had no smaller aircraft, being a tanker and bomber wing, but evidently were able to call in a nearby KC-135 (i.e., a 707 tanker) that must have been on "rotation" nearby. I myself overheard the conversation between the pilots and "base operations" confirming the sighting of the or a UFO in the area. Said UFO followed the KC 135 back towards the base, with a strong radar image, but no visual image.

The plane was required to "fly by" so it could be observed and nothing was seen where the radar said something was.

By this time the Base Commander and the Wing Commander, were in the area in staff cars. I spoke briefly with the Wing Commander, who I knew well, Col. Burrell, that evening. As the helicopters returned, with then was a photographer who had been rousted from his bunk. He was loaded into the staff car and driven away under escort to the photo lab. I did not speak with him, but clearly saw his photographic gear.

I did not see these UFOs. I did, however, speak directly with airmen who had seen them and indeed were seeing them.

During that week there were numerous reports, so numerous that the Air Force announced that B-58 bombers were flying over on "maneuvers." But, of course, whatever landed on Hotel 6 wasn't a B-52.

I am fully confident that during the summer of 1966 UFOs visited our Minuteman silos in the Dakotas, landed upon and penetrated those silos. We were powerless to stop them and the USAF covered up this entire chapter.

I suspect it is still classified and that I should not be talking about these events.

I vaguely remember being instructed not to speak about these matters and was, of course, operating under very tight above Top Secret security clearances.

I come forth because the missiles are non longer on active duty, the silos decommissioned and the time long past. I can think of no reason why these events should be covered up in the name or color of national security.

Something major happened that summer. And it happened to nuclear weapon systems that were armed and on

duty at the time.

((NUFORC Note: Date is approximate. PD))

GLOSSARY Chuck Hansen

Like all technological "priesthoods", the nuclear weapons labs have developed their own terminology over the years. Many of the words below have never appeared in the open literature, due to the closed nature of the labs and their work. Since the *Progressive* case in 1979, the labs have loosened up a little, and some of these "buzzwords" have turned up in congressional hearing transcripts and in other public documents. Most of these terms will be used throughout the remainder of this book.

ADM Acronym for Atomic Demolition Munition, a nuclear land mine designed to be detonated on or below the surface of the earth, or under water, to block, deny and/or channel enemy forces.

AFAP Acronym for Artillery-Fired Atomic Projectile, or nuclear artillery shell.

Airburst A nuclear explosion in the atomsphere. Specifically, a nuclear explosion in the air, at a height greater than the maximum radius of the fireball.

Airdrop To release or let fall from an aircraft in flight.

Air Zero The exact center or location of an airburst.

Alarm Clock Autocatalytic, or self-sustaining. An assembly with thin layers of thermonuclear fuels, alternating with thin oralloy or tuballoy sheets or foils.

Alpha A measure of the efficiency of a fission explosion. A count (in events per microsecond) of fission reactions, used to indicate the rate of fission build-up before core disassembly.

Alpha Decay Radioactive decay (transmutation from one element to an element lower on the periodic table) caused by emission of alpha particles. Plutonium decays to neptunium via alpha decay.

Alpha Particle A helium nucleus, composed of two protons and two neutrons. It has a positive electrostatic charge (due to the protons).

Arming As applied to a nuclear weapon, the changing from a safe (unarmed) condition to a state of readiness for detonation.

ASW Acronym for Anti-Submarine Warfare or Anti-Submarine Weapon (depending on context).

Atom The smallest part of an element which can enter into a chemical combination. An atom is composed of electrons orbiting a nucleus of neutrons and protons.

Atomic Number The number of protons in the nucleus of an atom of a given element.

Atomic Weight The number of neutrons and protons in the nucleus of an atom of a given element. Each of these particles has an approximate atomic weight of 1.

Barn A measure of area, equal to 10^{-24} centimeters^2 per nucleus. It is used to measure neutron capture cross section.

Baro A pressure-sensitive device used in some nuclear warheads to actuate arming and firing circuits. The term is a contraction of "barometric switch", also referred to as a "baroswitch".

Beryllium Element number 4, with an atomic number of 4 and atomic weights between 6 and 11. Used in nuclear weapons as a neutron reflector and neutron source.

Beta Decay Radioactive decay via emission of a beta particle (an electron) from the nucleus of an atom.

Boosting A term coined by Edward Teller in 1947 to describe a technique of improving the efficiency and explosive yield of fission devices by the timed injection of small amounts of tritium and deuterium gases into the hollow center of the fissile weapon core after the core has begun to fission.

Capsule The fissile core of a fission weapon, or a fusion fuel stage in a thermonuclear weapon. May also refer to core-internal initiators in early fission warheads.

Chain Reaction A self-sustaining nuclear reaction, where the energy and neutrons produced by the fission of the nucleus of an atom causes the fission of another nuclei, which in turn cause other nuclei to fission. This process multiplies at an exponential rate until all the fissile material is expended (converted by fission to energy, subatomic particles, and other elements), or until the explosive assembly physically disintegrates or expands to a point where fission can no longer occur.

Class A, B, C, D, E, F Weapon Terms commonly applied to one of six general classes of thermonuclear weapons (by weight), specified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for development and deployment. Class "A" weapons are the heaviest and Class "F" weapons are the lightest. These categories include warheads weights from 42,000 lbs. down to 700 lbs.

Clean Weapon A nuclear weapon so designed that upon detonation, the amount of contaminating material, in the form of either fission fragments or irradiating material (or both), is *relatively low* by comparison with other possible design variations of the same mark-numbered weapon. A weapon may also be "clean" by comparison with different mark-numbered weapons of the same general yield.

Critical Mass The minimum mass of a fissionable material that will just maintain a fission chain reaction under precisely specified conditions; these conditions include the particular material and its purity, the amount and type of tamper used, the density (or compression) of the fissionable material, and its physical shape and geometry.

Cross Section A measure of the statistical likelihood (probability) of a given event or reaction (such as neutron capture, or lithium-to-tritium conversion) within the nucleus of an atom of a given element. A measure of the probability of an encounter between particles that will result in a specified effect. Expressed in barns.

Delivery System An aerospace vehicle considered as a whole, with all associated components, to transport, launch, guide, and deliver nuclear weapons to their targets.

Depleted Uranium Natural uranium from which the uranium-235 isotope has been extracted (via gaseous diffusion, or centrifugal, laser, or electromagnetic separation). Also called tuballoy or uranium-238.

Deuteride A combining form of compounds containing deuterium, such as lithium deuteride.

Deuterium A heavy isotope of hydrogen, with an atomic weight of 2, an atomic number of 1, and a nucleus composed of a proton and a neutron. Often represented by the letter D. Used as a thermonuclear fuel constituent. In the complete transformation of deuterium to helium, the energy release is about 150 tons per gram, or about 68 kilotons per pound. One cubic meter of gaseous deuterium, when completely fused to itself, yields about 10 megatons of TNT-equivalent energy. One liter of liquid deuterium has the explosive potential of 39 kilotons of TNT.

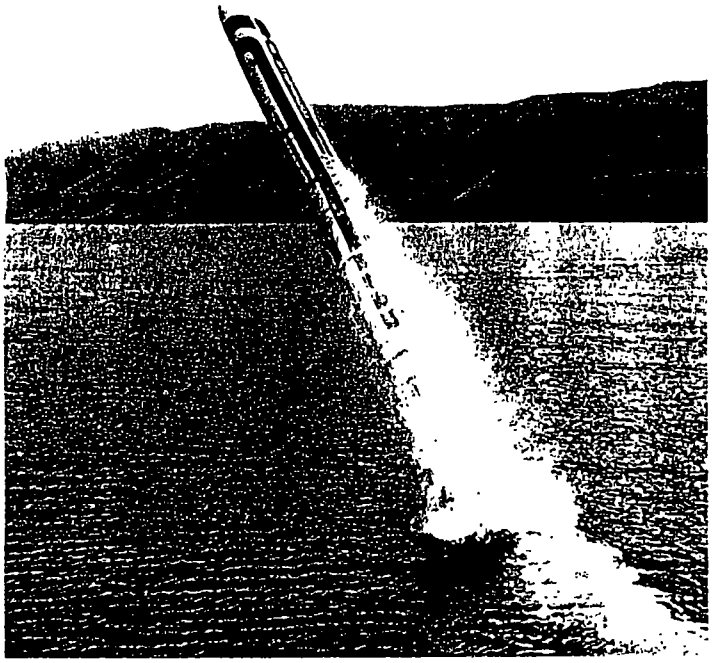
Deuteron The nucleus of a deuterium atom, composed of a proton and a neutron.

Device (nuclear) Nuclear fission and fusion materials, together with their arming, fuzing, firing, chemical high explosive, and effects-measuring components, that have not yet reached the development status of an operational weapon. A system designed to produce a nuclear explosion for purposes of testing the design, for verifying nuclear theory, or for gathering information on system performance. Many devices were designed for diagnostic purposes and not as bombs or weapons.

Dirty Weapon A nuclear weapon so designed that, upon detonation, the amount of contaminating material in the form of either fission fragments or irradiating material (or both), is *relatively high* by comparison with other possible design variations of the same mark-numbered weapon. A weapon may also be "dirty" by comparison with different mark-numbered weapons of the same general yield.

Drop Sequence The prescribed order of events which take place in the arming, fuzing, and firing systems of a nuclear weapon from the time of release to detonation.

U.S. Nuclear Weapons: the Secret History



General Dynamics BGM-109 "Tomahawk" Sea-Launched Cruise Missile after launch from submerged submarine. The "Tomahawk", currently widely deployed with U.S. Navy aircraft, surface ships, and submarines, uses a W-80 warhead. (GD via LANL)

Primary — The fission trigger (or first stage) of a multistage thermonuclear weapon or device.

Protium — A hydrogen isotope with an atomic weight of 1, an atomic number of 1, and a nucleus composed of a single proton. The most common form of hydrogen.

Proton — An electrostatically-positive charged atomic particle with an atomic weight of 1. The nucleus of an atom of common hydrogen.

Pusher — A tuballoy or oralloy tube or foil encasing the fusion fuel in secondary and tertiary stages of multistage thermonuclear weapons or devices. This material initially protects the sparkplug and fusion fuel from disintegration or predetonation caused by the blast and radiation from preceding stages (the primary or secondary). It next becomes a circumferential piston, driven by plasma to compress the fusion fuel and sparkplug within the capsule to between 5% and 7% of their original volume. It then tamps the thermonuclear explosion, and fissions when bombarded by high-energy neutrons radiating outward from the fusion reactions within the fusion fuel capsule. The fission of this jacket (when used) contributes significantly to the total explosive yield, its own yield being proportional to its oralloy content, uncompressed thickness, and extent of compression by preceding stages.

Radiation Implosion — A technique of using radiation from a nuclear explosion to implode a subsequent nuclear stage (capsule) containing thermonuclear fuel. The basis of modern U.S. multistage thermonuclear devices and weapons (see Staging).

Re-entry Vehicle — An integral portion of a ballistic missile which re-enters the atmosphere and which may include a warhead section, nose cone, flared section (skirt), arming and fuzing devices and other missile components. Frequently abbreviated RV.

Reflector — A dense metallic shield (surrounding a fissile weapon core) which reflects escaping neutrons back into the reacting (exploding) core. In the case of a boosted fission device, a reflector may also act as a neutron source, following the initiation of fusion reactions in the hollow center of the imploded fissile core.

Rollup — The orderly dismantling and transfer to other areas of equipment and facilities after a nuclear test series.

Runaway Burn — A self-sustaining, uncontrolled thermonuclear fusion reaction (explosion).

SADM — Acronym for Special Atomic Demolition Munition, a small nuclear land mine, components of which are man-portable.

Safing — As applied to nuclear weapons, the changing from an armed condition (ready to fire) to a state of being unable to fire (unarmed or disarmed).

Secondary — The thermonuclear explosives stage of a two-stage thermonuclear weapon or device, or the first thermonuclear explosives stage of a three-stage weapon or device.

Shake — A measure of time equivalent to 1/100,000,000th of a second. 10 nanoseconds or 1/100th of a microsecond. The time required for a uranium nucleus to fission.

SLADD — Acronym for Strategic Low Altitude Drogued Delivery. Like LADD, except that high-yield weapons are delivered.

Sparkplug — An oralloy or plutonium rod used as the igniter for a compressible fusion fuel capsule. It fissions when compressed and bombarded at one end by neutrons, heating the compressed fusion fuel, and furnishing neutrons for tritium generation (via lithium transformation in the fusion fuel mass).

Stage — A fission or fusion explosive capsule in a multistage fusion weapon. A fission stage consists of a fissile core, reflector, tamper, high explosives, detonators, and external neutron generator. A fusion stage consists of a sparkplug, fusion fuel, and pusher.

Staging — A technique of generating large thermonuclear explosions by means of increasingly-powerful intermediate nuclear explosions (see Teller-Ulam Configuration). Also called heterocatalytic explosions.

Subcritical Mass — A mass of fissile material which is insufficient to maintain a chain reaction (see Critical Mass).

Subsurface Burst — A nuclear explosion below ground or sea level.

Supercritical Mass — The state of a given fission system when the specified conditions are such that a greater than critical mass of fissionable material is present and the fission neutron production rate exceeds all neutron losses, causing a rapid and uncontrollable increase in the neutron flux within the mass.

Surface Burst — A nuclear explosion at ground or sea level.

Surface Zero — The point at ground or sea level directly at, above, or below a nuclear explosion. The "ground zero" of a surface burst; the point directly above a subsurface burst; or the point directly below an airburst.

Tamper — A heavy metal surrounding either a fissile core and reflector assembly or a charge of thermonuclear fuel. A tamper is used to contain and increase the force of an explosion. A tamper may also serve as a reflector, and, in the case of a boosted fission or thermonuclear device, as an additional fission fuel source.

Teller-Ulam Configuration — An assembly of staged atomic and thermonuclear explosives packages, permitting theoretically-unlimited explosive power. This configuration requires the use of oralloy or plutonium sparkplugs to ignite the thermonuclear fuel charge(s).

Tertiary — The second thermonuclear explosives stage of a three-stage thermonuclear weapon or device.

Thermonuclear Reaction — A nuclear reaction which occurs only under conditions of temperature (expressed as nuclei kinetic energies) and pressure sufficient to overcome the mutually-repulsive electrostatic charges of nuclei of light elements. Commonly called a TN reaction.