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| **The Malmstrom AFB UFO/Missile Incident**    This material is © Copyright 1999 by Robert Salas and Jim Klotz |

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| This is the story of extraordinary events that happened in 1967 to US Air Force Strategic Air Command Missile Combat Officers and other enlisted personnel; Missileers assigned to operate, maintain, and protect the Minuteman Intercontinental Ballistic Missile , an essential part of America's Cold War strategic nuclear deterrent.  This Web page presents an abbreviated version of the events of 16 March 1967.  ... by Jim Klotz and Robert Salas - 27-Nov-1996  Updated - 15-May-2000 - \*please note that in previous versions of this presentation, we stated that Robert Salas was on duty in the November-Flight LCC.  Later research and witness testimony has revealed that it was actually Oscar-Flight.\*  **ECHO-FLIGHT**  In central Montana, Thursday morning March 16 1967, Captain Eric Carlson and First Lieutenant. Walt Figel, the Echo-Flight Missile Combat Crew, were below ground in the E-Flight Launch Control Center (LCC) or capsule. The Echo Flight LCC was located between Winfred and Hilger, about fifteen miles north of Lewistown.  Missile maintenance crews and security teams were camped out at two of the Launch Facilities (LFs), having performed some work during the previous day and stayed there overnight. During the early morning hours, more than one report came in from the security patrols and maintenance crews that they had seen UFOs. A UFO was reported directly above one of the E-Flight (LF) or silos. It turned out that at least one security policeman was so affected by this encounter that he never again returned to missile security duty.  Around 8:30 a.m., Figel, the Deputy Crew Commander (DMCCC), was briefing the Carlson, the Crew Commander (MCCC), on the flight status when the alarm horn sounded. One of the Minuteman missiles they supervised had gone off alert (become inoperable) It was one of the two sites where maintenance crews had camped out on site. Upset, thinking that the maintenance personnel had failed to notify him as required by procedure when maintenance work is done on a missile, that the missile was going 'off-alert' status, Figel immediately called the missile site.  When Figel spoke with the on-site security guard, he reported that they had not yet performed any maintenance that morning. He also stated that a UFO had been hovering over the site. Figel recalls thinking the guard must have been drinking something. However, now other missiles started to go off alert in rapid succession! Within seconds, the entire flight of ten ICBMs was down! All of their missiles reported a "No-Go" condition. One by one across the board, each missile had became inoperable. When the checklist procedure had been completed for each missile site, it was discovered that each of the missiles had gone off alert status due to a Guidance and Control (G&C) System fault. Power had not been lost to the sites; the missiles simply were not operational because, for some unexplainable reason, each of their guidance and control systems had malfunctioned.  Two Security Alert Teams (SAT, "strike teams") were dispatched from Echo to those sites where the maintenance crews were present. Figel had not informed the strike teams that one of the on- site guards had reported a UFO. On arrival at the LF’s, the SAT reported back to that UFOs had been seen hovering over each of the two sites by all of the maintenance and security personnel present at each site.  Captain Don Crawford's crew relieved the Echo Flight crew later that morning. Crawford recalls that both Carlson and Figel were still visibly shaken by what had occurred. Crawford also recalled that the maintenance crews worked on the missiles the entire day and late into the night during his shift to bring them all back on alert. Not only had missiles been lost to our deterrent forces, but had remained out of service for an entire day!  Because of this unique incident, as an ex-Missileer describes it: "All Hell broke loose!" Among the many calls to and from the E-Flight LCC one was to the MCCC of Oscar-Flight which links to the equally dramatic story of what happened in another LCC that same morning.  **OSCAR-FLIGHT**  The Oscar Flight LCC was located a mile or two south of the town of Roy, about 20 miles southeast of the Echo-Flight LCC.  The following is as told by Robert Salas who was the DMCCC in O-Flight that morning:  My recollection is that I was on duty as a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander below ground in the LCC, during the morning hours of 16 March 1967.  Outside, above the subterranean LCC capsule, it was a typical clear, cold Montana night sky; there were a few inches of snow on the ground. Where we were, there were no city lights to detract from the spectacular array of stars, and it was not uncommon to see shooting stars. Montana isn’t called “Big Sky Country” for no reason, and Airmen on duty topside probably spent some of their time outside looking up at the stars.  It was one of those airmen who first saw what at first appeared to be a star begin to zig-zag across the sky.  Then he saw another light do the same thing, and this time it was larger and closer. He asked his Flight Security Controller, (FSC, the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in charge of Launch Control Center site security), to come and take a look. They both stood there watching the lights streak directly above them, stop, change directions at high speed and return overhead. The NCO ran into the building and phoned me at my station in the underground capsule.  He reported to me that they had been seeing lights making strange maneuvers over the facility, and that they weren't aircraft. I replied: "Great. You just keep watching them and let me know if they get any closer."  I did not take this report seriously and directed him to report back if anything more significant happened. At the time, I believed this first call to be a joke. Still, that sort of behavior was definitely out of character for air security policemen whose communications with us were usually very professional.  A few minutes later, the security NCO called again. This time he was clearly frightened and was shouting his words:  "Sir, there's one hovering outside the front gate!"  "One what?"  "A UFO! It's just sitting there. We're all just looking at it. What do you want us to do?"  "What? What does it look like?"  "I can't really describe it. It's glowing red. What are we supposed to do?"  "Make sure the site is secure and I'll phone the Command Post."  "Sir, I have to go now, one of the guys just got injured."  Before I could ask about the injury, he was off the line.  I immediately went over to my commander, Lt. Fred Meiwald, who was on a scheduled sleep period .  I woke him and began to brief him about the phone calls and what was going on topside.  In the middle of this conversation, we both heard the first alarm klaxon resound through the confined space of the capsule, and both immediately looked over at the panel of annunciator lights at the Commander's station.  A 'No-Go' light and two red security lights were lit indicating problems at one of our missile sites.  Fred jumped up to query the system to determine the cause of the problem.  Before he could do so, another alarm went off at another site, then another and another simultaneously.  Within the next few seconds, we had lost six to eight missiles to a 'No-Go' (inoperable) condition.  After reporting this incident to the Command Post, I phoned my security guard. He said that the man who had approached the UFO had not been injured seriously but was being evacuated by helicopter to the base. Once topside, I spoke directly with the security guard about the UFOs. He added that the UFO had a red glow and appeared to be saucer shaped. He repeated that it had been immediately outside the front gate, hovering silently.  We sent a security patrol to check our LFs after the shutdown, and they reported sighting another UFO during that patrol. They also lost radio contact with our site immediately after reporting the UFO.  When we were relieved by our scheduled replacement crew later that morning. The missiles had still not been brought on line by on-site maintenance teams.  Again, UFOs had been sighted by security personnel at or about the time Minuteman Strategic missiles shutdown.  **THE INVESTIGATION**  An in-depth post incident investigation of the E-Flight incident was undertaken. Full scale on-site and laboratory tests at the Boeing Company's Seattle plant were conducted.  Declassified Strategic Missile Wing documents and interviews with ex-Boeing engineers who conducted tests following the E-Flight Incident investigation confirm that no cause for the missile shutdowns was ever found. Robert Kaminski was the Boeing Company engineering team leader for this investigation. Kaminski stated that after all tests were done, : “There were no significant failures, engineering data or findings that would explain how ten missiles were knocked off alert,” and “…there was no technical explanation that could explain the event.”  The most that could be done was to reproduce the effects by introducing a 10 volt pulse onto a data line. Another Boeing Company engineer on the team, Robert Rigert, came up with this pulse that repeated the shutdown effects 80% of the time, but only when directly injected at the logic coupler. No explanation could be found for a source of such a pulse or "noise" occurring in the field and getting inside the shielded missile system equipment.  Others on the engineering team checked other possibilities. Lightning and problems in the commercial power system were acquitted as the source of the problem. William Dutton, another Boeing Company engineer, checked commercial power interruptions and transients, and stated: “No anomalies were found in this area.”  Several military activities and other engineering firms participated in the investigation, but no positive cause for the shutdowns was ever found, despite extensive and concentrated effort. One conclusion was that the only way a pulse or noise could be sent in from outside the shielded system was through an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from an unknown source. The technology of the day made generating an EMP of sufficient magnitude to enter the shielded system a very difficult proposition, requiring large, heavy, bulky equipment. The source of the actual pulse that caused the missile shutdowns remains a mystery to this day.  **OTHER SIGHTINGS**  According to articles from the Great Falls Tribune newspaper, on February 8, 1967 Louis DeLeon saw two strange objects in the sky which did not look like airplanes and they glowed an orange and red color while driving east of Chester, Montana. Later, ten miles east of Chester, Jake Walkman was awakened by a bright light at his home. From his back yard he sighted a "flying saucer" shaped object. The next evening, George Kawanishi, a foreman for the Great Northern Railroad, saw a bright ball of light in the sky directly above the Chester train depot. These are but a few of the sightings which preceded the missile shutdown incidents later in March.  It was during this same period, according to Col. Don Crawford (USAF ret.), that a two person SAT, assigned to Echo Flight, was performing a routine check of the missile launch facilities a few miles north of Lewistown, Montana. As they approached one of the launch facilities, an astonishing sight caused the driver to slam on his brakes. Stunned in amazement, they watched as, about 300 feet ahead, a very large glowing object hovered silently directly over the launch facility. One of them picked up his VHF hand microphone and called then Captain Don Crawford who was the DMCCC on duty that evening  “Sir, you wouldn’t believe what I’m looking at,” he said.  He described what they were seeing.  Crawford didn’t believe him at first but the young airman insisted he was telling the truth, his voice revealing his emotional state.  Eventually Crawford took him seriously enough to call the Command Post to report it.  The officer on duty at the Command Post refused to accept the report and simply stated, “We no longer record those kinds of reports,” indicating he didn’t want to hear about the UFO.  Crawford unsure of what to tell his shaken security guard, decided to give the guard his permission to fire his weapon at the object if it seemed hostile.  “Thanks, sir, but I really don’t think it would do any good,”   A few seconds later the object silently flew away.  There were sightings in the area before and after the missile shutdown incidents by military personnel and civilians.  **NATIONAL SECURITY**  During the events of that morning in 1967, UFOs were sighted by security personnel at the Oscar Flight LCC and at one O-Flight LF, and by other security and maintenance personnel at Echo-Flight LFs. These sightings were reported separately to the capsule crews at both LCCs at or about the same time Minuteman Strategic missiles shut down at both sites. USAF has confirmed that all of Echo flights' missiles shutdown within seconds of each other and that no cause for this could be found.  For many years, the Air Force has maintained that no reported UFO incident has ever affected national security. It is established fact that a large number of Air Force personnel reported sighting UFOs at the time many of our strategic missiles became non-launchable. The incidents described above clearly had national security implications. In one previously classified message, SAC Headquarters described the E-Flight incident as: loss of strategic alert of all ten missiles within ten seconds of each other for no apparent reason and a "**…cause for grave concern…(to SAC headquarters)**." (emphasis ours)  **There is a great discrepancy between the United States Air Force's public position relative to UFOs and national security, and the established facts of this case.**  **We hope that the Secretary of the Air Force will search for, declassify, and release all information on this case.**   |  | | --- | | **Our hope is that public knowledge of this now declassified incident will induce those who were among the security policemen and directly witnessed the UFOs over the Minuteman facilities, and others with any pertinent information, to come forward and add their stories to those of the Missile Combat Crew officers. We maintain that the American people have the right to know the truth about this and other UFO incidents which affected national security.**  **We welcome information about this or any other military/UFO incident from anyone. Please use the links below.** |   **Declassified USAF Documents**  Use these links to view representative pages from the declassified and released 341st Strategic Missile Wing unit history obtained under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as amended.   * [USAF declassification release letter](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/malmstrom/release.htm) * [341st SMW unit history cover page](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/malmstrom/341cover.htm) * [341st SMW unit history page 32](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/malmstrom/page32.htm) * [341st SMW unit history page 33](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/malmstrom/page33.htm) * [341st SMW unit history page 34](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/malmstrom/page34.htm) * [341st SMW unit history page 38](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/malmstrom/page38.htm) * [Strategic Air Command message](http://www.cufon.org/cufon/malmstrom/sacmsg.htm) |