

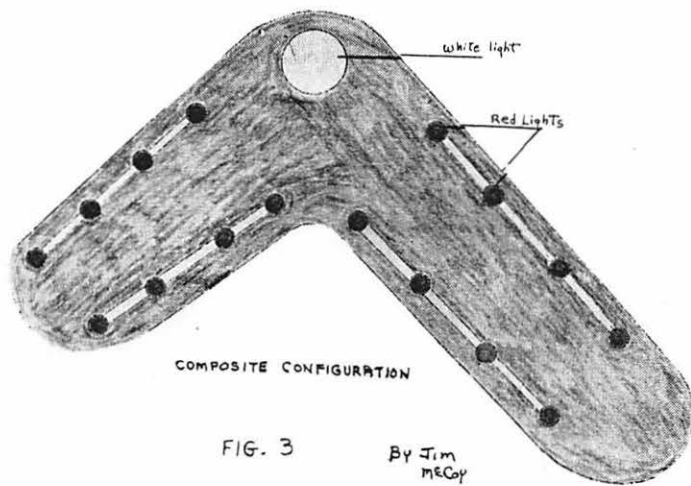
# the apro bulletin

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## UFO OVER COPPER SMELTER



### METEOR OR UFO?

(The following is a narrative of the experience of Terry L. Wright and his companions on an August afternoon at 3 p.m. in 1972). The sighting occurred while my mother, my brother, my ex-wife and I were enroute from Lewiston to Orofino Idaho. A radio program was interrupted to announce the appearance of a meteor over Boise Idaho, stating that several people had seen it and the time. Within minutes, (about four), another bulletin stated that the meteor had been seen over McCall Idaho. This indicated that the object was coming toward us and I expressed the hope that we might see it if we were not too severely limited by the canyon walls. The estimated time of the announcement and the object coming into our view was seven minutes by our (my) calculations, which caused me to remark that the velocity seemed low for a meteor.

In about six minutes we sighted what appeared to be a self-luminous object on the proper flight path for the meteor described. Range may have been between

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On the evening of October 23rd, 1980, one of the most well-witnessed UFO sightings in history took place in the little mining town of Morenci, Arizona. Located on US 666, it is about 20 miles northeast of Safford, Arizona, which is on Interstate 10 in southeastern Arizona. Morenci is a typical Arizona copper mining town and the site of two huge copper smelters which are owned and operated by Phelps-Dodge Corporation.

APRO's investigator on this case was Jim McCoy who did in-depth interviews with five of the witnesses. There were a host of other witnesses and hopefully they can be interviewed at a later date. However, inasmuch as the five men observed the object at relatively close range, their testimony is central to the facts in the case.

Randell Rogers and Larry Mortensen, both employees at Phelps-Dodge, left their work area at 8:55 p.m. to proceed to the lunch area for the evening "break." They entered an open type of vehicle (no cab) and enroute to the lunch area they stopped and picked up Joe Nevarez, Kent David and James Best. (Please see illustrations which accompany this text.)

After starting the vehicle up again, they noticed an object approaching from the north at an altitude of approximately 1500 to 2000 feet and Nevarez exclaimed, "Hey, you guys, look at the flying saucer!" One or two of the others remarked that "it" was just an airplane and laughed. Nevarez then demanded that the vehicle be stopped so that he could get a better look at the object.

When the vehicle was brought to a stop and the men looked up, they were amazed to see a boomerang-shaped object approaching the north smoke stack of the smelter area at a very low speed which they later told Mr. McCoy that they estimated to be about five miles per hour. When it arrived at a position directly over the north stack, it stopped and hovered for a minute or so, then came straight down vertically to an estimated altitude of about 700 to 1,000 feet, not far above the stack. After a brief period of time a brilliant light erupted from the forward apex of the boomerang configuration and shone directly down into the interior of the north smelter stack. The witnesses described this light as brighter than a search light or that of an

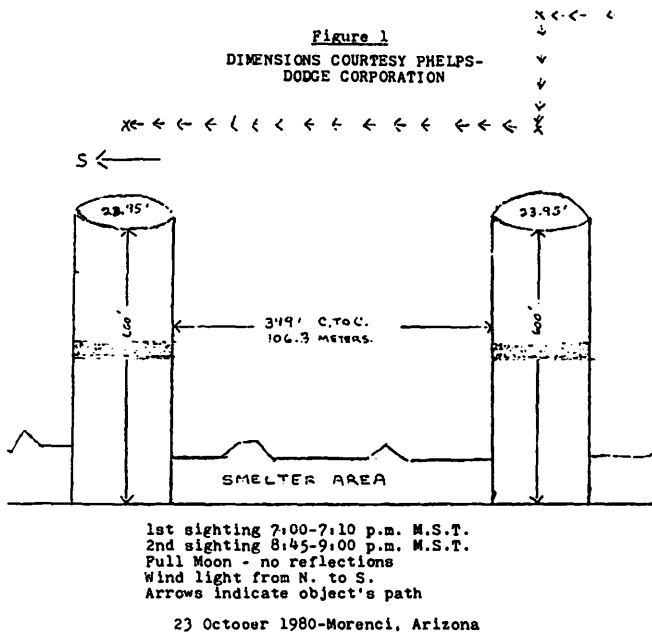
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that by instant reversal, the witnesses meant that the object did not turn, climb, dive or take any radius turn, but just instantly reversed and was back over the smelter area where it accelerated out of sight in the north, the direction from which it had come.

While the object was in the smelter area it was observed by all five witnesses and the following is a composite narrative of the description of the object:

It was in a boomerang configuration with a forward apex of the wing of approximately 120 degrees, and one "wing" appeared to be shorter than the other with a distance from tip to tip of the "wings" appearing to be about 1/4 mile. The object was dull black in color, resembling 1/2" steel plate, and did not reflect light. There were no seams, rivets or other surface markings noted. The large beam of light which was directed into the interior of the stacks was located near the forward center of the apex. The witnesses stated that they



could look at this light without any ill effect and it compared with the glow of a full moon.

On each "wing" there were 8 bright reddish lights, four on each leading edge and 4 on each trailing edge. These lights seemed to be about 75 feet apart and were interconnected by a white tube of light (like a fluorescent bulb but much larger). All lights on the object remained steady at all times and did not blink, rotate, flash or otherwise change in any manner except when shown into the interior of the smelter stacks. It made no sound at any time, and was observed with the aid of a full moon which had just risen.

There are no lights on the smelter stacks for aircraft warning or otherwise, and no lights in the area reflect upward. The weather was clear with no clouds, lightning, precipitation or other atmospheric phenomena present. The winds were light and variable from the north. A small amount of smoke was being emitted from each of the smelter stacks.

Another sighting of what was either the same or a similar object was made by Joe Nevarez and James Best at 9 p.m. This object approached from the north but at a higher altitude (about 6,000 feet), hovered, and traveled slowly about the area for about 5 to 10 minutes. This sighting was corroborated by a law enforcement official (who wishes to remain anonymous) located five miles to the west, observing with the aid of 10 power binoculars. He stated that while the object was stationary one small red light descended vertically down from it and left at a very high rate of speed in the direction of Silver City, New Mexico (slightly south of due east of Morenci). Another red light dropped and went north in the direction of the San Carlos Indian reservation. After 1 or 2 minutes, these objects returned and merged with the boomerang shape which in turn departed at a very high rate of speed into the north and out of sight.

APRO was alerted concerning the Morenci sighting on January 10 by Mr. Samuel Player, the editor of the Eastern Arizona Courier of Safford, Arizona, and some of the above information was carried in the press. In addition to the five smelter workers, who were "almost" under the object, Greenlee County Sheriff Ralph Gomez, several Morenci businessmen among others, witnessed the passage of the huge object. One hundred (100) members of the Morenci High School band and the director were among the host of individuals who watched.

There are indications that this object was witnessed on at least one and possibly more occasions and the *Bulletin* will follow up on this case if further details come to hand.

(Editor's note: The boomerang-shape is not totally unfamiliar in UFO lore, but then it is not as widely seen as the discs or cigar-shapes either. The searchlight shining down from the object is another characteristic of some UFOs seen often enough that it is not tremendously outstanding. The one mind-boggling characteristic about the object in this instance is its apparent ability to reverse course without banking or executing any of the other maneuvers generally associated with a change in trajectory. In a report handled by this office in the middle 1960s involving policemen who observed a cigar-shaped object which hovered over a field, it approached them with lightning speed, then "snapped back" to its original position without changing flight attitude. We have not researched this case to get the exact date, but mention it here for comparison purposes.)

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