

1957: E. coast of Florida
(e. of Jacksonville)

"CE1" near collision

In the early morning hours of March 9, 1957, Captain Matthew Van Winkle, commanding Pan American flight 257, was nearing Miami. It was raining lightly and Captain Van Winkle had purposely deviated from

(Please turn page)

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his planned course in order to avoid a severe thunderstorm farther inland. The Douglas DC-6A he was flying was full of passengers and he had absolutely no intention of shaking them up unnecessarily. Captain Van Winkle had no way of knowing that what was about to happen would shake up his passengers far more than any thunderstorm.

Van Winkle was just about to contact Miami approach control when he noticed a brilliant light traveling east to west at a high rate of speed and that appeared as though it would intersect his course at a right angle. Van Winkle, a level-headed man who did not believe in "flying saucers," instantly came up with an explanation for the object. Since he had deviated from his course and there were numerous governmental facilities in the area (including the Atlantic missile range), he reasoned that the object was an Air Force jet interceptor sent up to see who he was. As the object closed rapidly, Van Winkle realized this was incorrect. The object was far too brilliant to be jet exhaust. It appeared to be a circular object with a greenish-white center surrounded by a bright rim which reflected the greenish glow. Van Winkle also realized something else. The object was not merely on an intercept course, it was on a collision course.

To avoid a mid-air collision Van Winkle hauled back on the control wheel, putting the DC-6 into a steep climb. He was then forced to abruptly lower the nose in order to prevent stalling or looping the plane, and as he did so several of the passengers were thrown from their seats by the momentum of the rapid 1,500-foot climb. Some of them were injured, and Van Winkle was forced to inform Miami tower to have ambulances and doctors waiting for the plane's arrival.

The Civil Aeronautics Board (forerunner of the FAA) and the Air Force were notified, and the debunking process began. First Van Winkle's own explanation that he had seen a jet interceptor was tried. That was quickly shot down by Miami Control. There had been no jets in the area. Next came missile exhaust trails. Again no good. Cape Canaveral denied any launchings. After that it was suggested that Van Winkle had perhaps imagined the whole thing. That turned out to be a bad move. The object had also been witnessed by seven other airliner crews in the area. Undaunted by the statements of the other crews but

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realizing that there would have to be an explanation which made use of some solid object which could have been seen by everybody, the Air Force came up with "the real explanation." Van Winkle, a pilot with over 17 years' experience, the Air Force asserted, had merely been excited by a shooting star several miles away and had overreacted. As far as the Air Force was concerned, the case was closed.

The
"Van Winkle"
Case.

Extract
from article
in OFFICIAL
UFO, Apr '76
by

Robert Charles Cornett, who
is a journalist & NICAP
member.

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Loren Gross' extended coverage of the affair:

8 March. "What's going on out over the Atlantic?"

There is a long airline that stretches south from New York City to the West Indies. This invisible highway in the sky runs along the eastern seaboard of the U.S. This region is also a vital air defense zone protecting the approaches to the American mainland.

The night of March 8/9 seven airliners were flying in the aforementioned airline. Five of the flights were Pan-American: Flight #269 piloted by Capt. Edward Perry, Flight #215-A piloted by Capt. Kenneth Browsdell, Flight #257 piloted by Capt. Matthew A. Van Winkle, Flight #215 piloted by Robert Wyland, and Flight #257-A piloted by Capt. D. Strum (The other two passenger planes, an Eastern and a Trans-Caribbean, played no role in the incidents we are about to relate).

All of these Pan Am airliners were heading south, or southeast, in a line occupying an airspace 250-300 miles long.

9 March. Checkpoint "Delta Oscar," a navigation position at sea off the Carolinas. (12:45 a.m.)

A puzzling precursor to subsequent events took place here. Flight 215-A piloted by Capt. Browsdell was near "Delta Oscar" when something came into view due west of the airliner's position. A brilliant body could be seen streaking by on a northern course. The description of this sighting says:

"It moved in a completely horizontal trajectory, and had a red tail-like projection, which suddenly dropped off, and fell 'like a flare.' The main part, which was green, continued in a straight line and passed out of Browsdell's range of vision. [Engineer Smith sitting in the co-pilot's seat]...on the right side of the cockpit, looked back as it passed, and thought he saw it quickly disappear into the clouds; however, a later check indicated that there were few, if any, clouds in the area. Browsdell said he saw it for about three seconds; Smith slightly longer. Several of Browsdell's passengers had seen it also." (99.)

Capt. Browsdell thought the object was unusual but he didn't make a big fuss about it. Walking back through the passenger cabin Capt. Browsdell asked if anyone had noticed anything although it was the middle of the night and nearly everyone was dozing. A few people, however, told Capt. Browsdell they had seen a bright greenish light. (100.)

Hours passed.

The long line of airliners drew closer to the West Indies.

At 4:30 a.m. AST Flight 215 with Capt. Wyland at the controls observed a blob of light in the pitch black sky. Capt. Wyland later told newsmen: "It appeared first as a bright light, traveling fast...it grew in intensity until it was exceedingly brilliant for a moment as it passed, then it seemed to fade." (101.)

According to Wyland the perimeter of the thing was a greenish-blue which blended into a white center. As the thing passed his plane, Capt. Wyland observed enough to tell something about the object's path, and that portion of the object not visible before. Capt. Wyland said it:

"...looked at first as though it were coming directly toward us on our flight level. It either veered slightly, or our original impression was in error, as it slanted diagonally across our starboard quarter descending, and seemed to 'go out.' As it passed, there was a definite reddish tinge to the tail or rear portion, and a piece seemed to fall off, or was ejected. The portion that dropped off was 10% the size of the whole, and was definitely reddish in color." (102.)

A hundred or so miles behind Flight 215 was Flight 257.

9 March. 700 miles east of Jacksonville, Florida. (4:30 a.m. AST).

Among the long line of passenger planes was Pan Am Flight 257 piloted by Capt. M. Van Winkle. Other members of the crew were co-pilot D.W. Taylor and Flight Engineer J. Washuta.

Flight 257 out of Idlewild was flying at 19,000 feet and had reached check point "India-Oscar" east of Jacksonville. The flight so far had been routine. There were 44 passengers aboard.

There was a storm front to the east out in the Atlantic which concerned Capt. Van Winkle enough to ask for clearance to move a little out of the airline to the west, closer to the mainland. Even though he was west of the normal track, Capt. Winkle wasn't that worried because he made periodical radio reports to ground air traffic control. He knew that he was also intruding into an Air Defense Identification Zone guarded around the clock by the Air Defense Command. Even though Flight 257 posed no danger

the plane still might experience a visit from jet interceptors on a practice run. Capt. Winkle was familiar with the procedure. Identification of air traffic in the zone was not done solely by radio or radar. If need be, jet fighters were directed to intercept any strange aircraft so a visual check could be made. The jets were equipped with powerful spotlights to light up the wings and tail surfaces of the intruder making it possible to read any markings.

"It came out of nowhere."

Flight 257 was flying along on automatic pilot. Capt. Van Winkle stared ahead at the vast blackness of the night.

Suddenly an orange glowing point of light appeared out of nowhere. This point of light grew in size with tremendous speed. The object had flashed by Flight 215 and within seconds was now approaching Flight 257. Within a second the blob of light: "...assumed the appearance of a round, brilliant greenish-white 'spotlight,' almost as large as a full moon," said Capt. Van Winkle. (103.) The light appeared to be on a collision course.

Co-pilot Dion Taylor was working on some navigation instruments. He turned his back and in that position saw nothing of what happened next. Flight Engineer John Washuta, however, had a clear view of the sky out the cockpit window and got a good look at the light. Engineer Washuta's impression was that: "The light appeared 'contained,' having a clear and well defined edge... 'rim-like' around the edge... [which] seemed to reflect a greenish color, while the center was a brilliant white. It looked like a spotlight directed to the front of them, so that they were not looking directly into the source of the light." (104.)

For a split second Capt. Winkle's mind was paralyzed, and then the thought of jet interceptors flashed through his consciousness, yet there was only one light. Where was the second fighter, and why was the light so brilliant? To Capt. Winkle the approaching light seemed to be "aircraft size" and level with his plane.

With almost no time to think, Capt. Winkle made his move which was half reflex. He jerked the controls up and to the left. This sudden override of the automatic pilot made the maneuver even more severe. Out of the corner of his eye Capt. Winkle saw the blob of light pass out of sight, obscured by the right wing. For some time Capt. Winkle thought the light was lower in altitude than his plane because the glowing blob appeared to pass under the wing, but after giving the matter some thought he realized that the wing had tipped up quickly during the violent banking of the airliner.

Engineer Washuta, free to follow the light with his eyes and seated on the right side of the cockpit, had the best view. He said the light "just went out" and was no longer seen after that. (105.)

The airliner was now in a steep climb. One of the passengers, Marle W. Reddington later testified:

"The plane was darkened and we were all asleep. When this terrible lurch took place. Everything on the plane (on luggage racks) was thrown [about?] and [I?] hit my head on the rack above. No one bothered to announce anything or explain anything. There was a general feeling of panic on the plane." (106.)

A news service (INS) later reported, incorrectly, a light equivalent to a "hundred suns" filled the cabin.

The tail of the airliner dropped so far and so fast the passengers were tossed about. At least two injuries were serious. One woman suffered a possible concussion, another woman a broken rib.

Capt. Edward Perry, piloting Flight 269 about 150 miles behind Winkle, saw a brilliant light to the northeast of his Pan Am plane. He said it appeared almost like: "...a magnesium flash, white with pale greenish tints around it ...at first I thought that it was a flare, then I thought it could be another of those 'mis-guided' missiles. I saw it for about five seconds - it must have been moving at a terrific speed." (107.) As for its path, Capt. Perry: "...described it as arcing upward and then falling slightly in a concave trajectory as it moved on an apparently east, southeast, course." (108.)

Meanwhile, Capt. Winkle was trying to regain control of his aircraft. Co-pilot Dion Taylor, whose back was turned when the "UFO" streaked passed, yelled: "What's wrong Rip? For heaven's sake push her over [dive], push her over!" (109.)

As soon as he had the airliner straight and level, Capt. Winkle opened a channel to ground control to report the "near miss." All the other pilots in region were also on the radio and they were all talking at once. The mix of excited chatter made individual words hard to understand but Capt. Winkle remembered some of it: "Brilliant light to starboard," "UFO report," "What was it?" (110.)

Back in the cabin passenger Reddington questioned a stewardess:

"When the individual lights went [out?] one, one at a time --some [passengers] were donning their life jackets. I asked her and she didn't know (she said) and never explained further. After a good ten minutes an announcement was made: 'I thought I saw another plane in my path and swerved to avoid it.' By then no one had any confidence in that plane or pilot." (111.)

The encounter becomes public.

The first public mention of the aerial encounter appeared that afternoon in a dispatch issued by United Press (There were mentions on the radio and TV also but this writer has no details). Press dispatch said:

"San Juan, Puerto Rico, 9th of March, UP.--A flaming object was encountered at a great altitude by an aircraft belonging to Pan American Airways over the Atlantic. The pilot being obliged to make a rapid maneuver to avert it. Four persons were hospitalized by this commotion and minor injuries were suffered caused by these rapid maneuvers. Two of the injured are residents of Philadelphia. The Captain, Mathew A. Van Winkle, said that he could not identify the flaming object that imperilled his airliner, when it was half-way between New York and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"A pilot, who was not identified, of a transcaribbean airline, said that he also saw the object and said that it appeared to be a meteor. A spokesman for Pan American said that other aircraft on the same route saw more than one object. A spokesman for the same company in New York said of information received that the pilot had declared to have seen an object with a very brilliant trail of fire with a green fringe. This same informant said that the Air Force had no operations of jet aircraft in the area where the incident occurred and that the pilots of at least seven more aircraft saw this mysterious object.

"An official from Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, said that this object which had been seen was not a projectile (missile) from their base, explaining that the aerial route between San Juan and New York was too far from the projectile testing grounds. Van Winkle said that his first impression when he saw this rare object was that it was a jet propulsion aircraft, but that when it approached he saw that it did not have the characteristics of any 'jet' aircraft known.

"To avoid a collision, Van Winkle veered and straightened his airplane in almost a vertical ascent, rising some 1500 feet in just a few seconds. The rapid climb and the veering found the passengers unprepared." (112.)

First official reaction.

The United Press contacted the Pentagon for more information. The news service learned very little, but the story it came up with is interesting because NICAP's Admiral Fahrney was given a mention. This reflected favorably on the future of the civilian organization.

As Coral Lorenzen of APRO would later complain, the Air Force "had the press in their pocket." During flaps or in the wake of a UFO incident of sufficient significance: "...the Air Force 'spokesman' made the usual statement about the lack of scientific evidence of their [UFOs] existence, the possible explanations (meteors, balloons, etc.) and that they were not from outer space and that was that." (113.) Mrs. Lorenzen wished the press would check with her before a rush to judgement, but the realities of life meant that the news media paid little attention to an Arizona group run by a housewife. NICAP, however, was quite a different matter:

"The Department of the Defense could not identify today the flaming object that almost collided with an aircraft of Pan American Airways at great altitude over the Atlantic.

"A spokesman said that the Department had not received any information regarding the incident. It refused to state if a runaway guided missile could have been the flaming object. There have been considerable controversies in the last few years over similar incidents where flying saucers are seen. The Air Force said in October, 1955, that after a study of over eight years they could say that such objects could not exist.

"Retired Rear Admiral Delmar S. Fahrney, expert in all that refers to guided missiles, said at the beginning of this year certain unidentified objects, guided it seems by certain intelligences, are penetrating the earth's atmosphere. He also says that these rare objects acquire such velocity that neither the United States nor Russia could duplicate." (114.)

11 March. The Journal American interviews Van Winkle.

When the Pan Am pilots returned to Idlewild the New York Journal American assigned a reporter to get a first person exclusive from Capt. Van Winkle. Van Winkle was quoted as saying: "...as to what 'it' was, I have less an idea today than when I tried to evade it. And then, frankly, I didn't know what it was." (120.)

The Journal American reporter wrote: "...'It' was laconically described as a UFO --'unidentified flying object' --in a radio report relayed to eastern air defense force headquarters by a Civil Aeronautics Administration communications center that intercepted Van Winkle's report." (121.)

The Air Force's policy of UFO news management was off to a bad start. Not only did the civilian press scoop the military, the Journal American printed unsubstantiated rumors: "An unofficial report said a jet intercept task force accompanied by a radar plane was sent aloft to investigate from a Strategic Air Command Fighter Base in the south. Its findings, if any, are classified." (122.)

17 March. Maiquetia, Venezuela.

Van Winkle's co-pilot speaks up.

If we can believe what we read in the Latin American press, Capt. Van Winkle's co-pilot D.W. Taylor wasn't convinced the UFO was a meteor. Interviewed at the city of Maiquetia by reporter Gumersindo Villasana, Taylor made this statement: "...due to the shape of the object, its lights, the way it flew and maneuvered, it could be only the product of intelligent beings..." (135.) The co-pilot refused to do an extended interview, according to Villasana, because he feared adverse reactions from aeronautical authorities in the U.S. and his employer, Pan American Airways.

Keyhoe takes the Van Winkle case on:

On March 9, 1957, a new and sensational UFO report added to the public confusion about flying saucers. It also gave us our first chance for a behind-the-scenes investigation of an important case.

About 6 A.M. I was awakened by a telephone call. It came from a NICAP member in Washington, an official in a Government aviation agency.

"My office just phoned," he said. "They told me a Pan American DC-6 nearly collided with a 'saucer' three hours ago. The Civil Aeronautics Board got a preliminary flash and a follow-up from Miami Air Traffic Control."

"Where did it happen?"

"Off Florida, on the New York-San Juan run. Here are the main points in the CAB flash: 'Douglas 6A PAA Flight 257

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FLYING SAUCERS: Top Secret

to avoid unidentified object traveling east to west, pilot took violent evasive action. Object appeared to have a brilliant greenish-white center with an outer ring which reflected the glow from the center.

"First impression was jet afterglow followed by spotlight. Above description fits with what seven other flights also saw which were within a range of 250 to 300 miles. . . . Miami ATC reports no missile activity. . . . Original reports of possible jet activity discounted.'¹ That's it, Don. I'll mail you a copy."

"You think the story will break?"

"It's bound to. Some passengers were hurt and the captain radioed San Juan to have ambulances at the airport."

As quickly as possible, NICAP members interviewed the Pan American pilots and also some of the passengers. Several important details had been missed by the papers.

It was just before midnight on March 8 when Flight 257 took off from Idlewild International Airport, on Long Island. Because of a storm center over the Atlantic, Captain Matthew Van Winkle flew west of his usual course.

At 3:33 A.M., the DC-6 was at 70 degrees, 40 minutes west longitude, 30 degrees north latitude—approximately abeam of Jacksonville. First Officer D. W. Taylor had gone back into the cabin when a bright light abruptly appeared to the right of the plane.

For a split second, Captain Van Winkle thought it was the spotlight of a jet interceptor. Since he was off the regular flight path, a jet pilot might be checking the plane's identity. But he swiftly dismissed the idea. The light was too bright, and it had a sharply defined edge, like a shiny rim reflecting the glow.

The strange object seemed to be headed toward the plane, on a collision course. Captain Van Winkle hauled back on the controls, overriding the automatic pilot. The DC-6 zoomed steeply, climbing 1,500 feet before he could get the nose down. Most of the passengers, belts unfastened, were

¹ Official copy on file at NICAP.

thrown from their seats. Hand baggage, coats and parcels flew through the air.

As Van Winkle got the DC-6 under control, the radio came alive with excited reports from other Pan American pilots on the San Juan run. The first was Captain Edward Perry; he too had seen the unknown object. Then Captain Robert Wyland called in. The UFO, he said, had a reddish rear-section which dropped off and fell like a flare.

Two hours before, Captain Kenneth G. Brosdal told Van Winkle, he had seen another mystery object, just like the one Wyland had described. It appeared as if a fiery rear-section had dropped away from the main part. Until now, he had kept still to avoid ridicule.

Since the Wyland and Brosdal reports paralleled the description of a rocket booster, the object Van Winkle saw was at first suspected of being a United States missile which had gone astray. But even before all the evidence was known to us, we had ruled out this answer.

Very few cases were on record where missiles had gone so far out of control; almost always, missiles in trouble were destroyed by remote control. The odds against two missiles going astray in the same area, at about the same time, were astronomical. Also, Florida missile launchings always were monitored by the press. As a final point, the official CAB flash had said there was no missile activity.

Inevitably, some papers suggested the UFO had been a large meteor. But Van Winkle told NICAP the object had moved *below* the horizon, which would cancel that answer. Having seen thousands of meteors, he was positive he had sighted an unknown object, though it was farther than he had believed at first. Most of the other pilots agreed.

By federal law, the CAB had to investigate this airline accident. With the aid of outside scientists, it began a thorough check.

Without waiting for the scientists' opinion, the Air Force quickly gave an answer to the press:

The "mystery object" seen by the Pan American crews was only a shooting star.

The Air Force gave no hint that Van Winkle and other pilots had rejected this explanation.

Weeks later, the CAB told me the case was still unsolved. Their astronomer consultants had found no proof of a shooting star or fireball. But our attempts to publicize this failed. By then, most of the press had printed the Air Force answer.

Tacker Blows the case off:

In another case, in the Spring of 1957, a commercial airliner flying between New York and San Juan, Puerto Rico, at 19,000 feet, sighted a large bright object that appeared to be coming directly toward the airliner. It was described by the pilot as a magnesium-flash with a pale green tint. The pilot swerved his aircraft violently to avoid collision with the strange aerial object.

The Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center checked all military flights in the Atlantic for that date and determined that there were no unusual planes or missile activities for that day. In addition, they found that five of the commercial aircraft flights in approximately the same area reported similar sightings. Position plots on the map showed that all planes had sighted the same object. Three of the aircraft reported the object seemed to split apart in the air. The description, of course, coincides with the known features of a bolide or fireball. As a final check all data for this sighting was submitted to the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and they confirmed and concurred with the Aerospace Technical Intelligence Center's conclusions.

In trying to identify the alarming objects approaching his plane, the pilot often thinks first of a meteor, then rejects the idea with some form of the remark, "Whatever it was, it was certainly not a meteor; I've seen meteors and I can't be fooled." He usually adds that no meteor could travel so fast (or so slowly) as the one he saw; so high (or so low); could have such a color; steer so "obvious" a collision course; fly as part of so orderly a group; move in so level (or so steeply angled) a path; maintain so steady a course; change course so abruptly; move so silently; or create so loud a detonation.

Such an incident occurred on a Pan American flight from New York to San Juan early on the morning of March 9, 1957. At about 3:30 A.M. when the plane was off Jacksonville, Florida, the pilot and the flight engineer saw a burning, greenish-white, round object coming out of nowhere, seemingly only a half mile away and headed across their nose on a direct collision course [19]. In such a situation a plane's captain cannot waste time in analyzing what he sees, but must act. In a violent evasive move he put the plane into a climb of about 1500 feet, during which several passengers were thrown out of their seats and injured. At the same moment the crews of at least seven other flights within an area of 300 miles were reporting the same object. One witness saw it split in two and the fiery rear section drop away. About an hour earlier, the pilot of another plane in the area had seen the breakup of a similar meteor but had not reported it. In spite of all the evidence that the unknown was a normal meteor, breaking apart as many meteors do, the Pan American pilot, "having seen thousands of meteors," could not accept the object as a natural phenomenon although he did realize, after he heard the other reports, that he had greatly underestimated its distance. The object showed all the characteristics of a typical fireball, but the flying-saucer cultists have still tried to convert this undoubted meteor into an unknown object.

as
does
Manzel:

How many rpt'd
the object
breaking up?
"3"? "1"?
"0"? "Maybe"?
Man, you can't
trust these
guys.

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in this case,
but I v'd
Manzel's own
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there is
none for
this date.

Note that SAO
& "Harvard"
are the same
thing, & it's
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Manzel the
list.

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"Madam"

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[Faint handwritten notes in red ink on the right side of the page]

1957: off E. coast of Florida
in Bahamas

REV
Commercial * ↓ note:
Pilot.

PAN-AM PILOT TRACKS UFO ON RADAR

March 29, 1957: Piloting Pan American flight #206A from Nassau to New York, Captain Ken Brosdal (who will be remembered as one of the pilots involved in the Van Winkle sighting of March 8, 1957) and two of his crew watched a UFO both visually and on radar as it "dogged" them at their speed, moving in the same direction, southeast of their plane. At about 7:30 p.m. their position was 74° 20' West, 30° North; they were flying at 16,000 feet through the tops of cumulus clouds. John Wilbur, the engineer, was in the co-pilot's seat; co-pilot George Jacobson was navigating, and saw the object first. Brosdal writes:

"About 50 miles east of Papa 3 - a check point between Nassau and Tuna - the co-pilot, engineer and myself saw a very bright white light. It seemed to grow in intensity to the point where it would be about three or four times as strong as Venus rising and would then subside. This happened three or four times; meanwhile, I 'came to' enough to check the radar screen. Sure enough, a target showed up at 3 o'clock, 45 to 50 miles away. Using the cursor on the face of the radar, I checked the angle of sighting and it checked with the visual angle.

"The light appeared to be stationary (on the scope), or moving in a north-east direction (same as us). We watched the light visually for about four or five minutes, and on radar for twenty minutes." Neither the light nor the blip had any definite shape; the radar image indicated that it was larger than normal aircraft. The scope was tuned to a 50-mile range. What impressed Captain Brosdal most was the intensity of the light in its bright phases. After perhaps four cycles of brightening and dimming, the light faded out slowly and completely. Captain Brosdal did not alert the passengers, and apparently no one in the cabin of the plane saw it.

Radar-Visual Sighting by PAA Flight

March 29, 1957: About 7:30 p.m. local time, Pan American flight 206A was northbound off the east coast of Florida, at 30 degrees N. Latitude. The plane was enroute to New York from Nassau at 16,000 feet, moving through the tops of cumulus clouds, on a heading of 25 degrees magnetic. At the controls was Capt. Kenneth G. Brosdal. The engineer, John Wilbur, was in the co-pilot's seat. The co-pilot, George Jacobson, was navigating.

"About 50 miles east of Papa-3, a checkpoint between Nassau and Tuna," Capt. Brosdal stated, "we (the co-pilot, engineer and myself) saw this very bright white light. It seemed to grow in intensity to the point where it would be about 3 or 4 strengths of a rising Venus, then would subside. This happened about 3 or 4 times, during which I came to enough to check on the radar screen. Sure enough, a target showed up at 3 o'clock between 45-50 miles away.

"Using the cursor on the face of the radar, I checked the angle of sighting and it checked with the visual angle. This light appeared to be stationary, or moving in a N.E. direction (same as us). I observed this on the scope long after the light went out. I checked with Miami ATC [Air Traffic Control] but no other traffic or firing was in the area, to their knowledge." [40]

The radar set, tuned to the 50 mile range, tracked the unidentified target for 20 minutes. The visual observation lasted 4-5 minutes. The blip on the scope, Capt. Brosdal added, indicated an apparent size in excess of the size of normal aircraft. The altitude of the light, on the basis of angle of sight and radar ranging, was estimated to be 20,000 to 25,000 feet.

Capt. Brosdal indicated that he was most impressed by the exceptional intensity of the light during the bright phase of pulsation.

J. E. McDONALD

AUG 2 1968

From *Blackburn* #1149

← from UFO Evidence.

* Brosdal, 20 days earlier, was one of the pilots who saw the Van Winkle case object.

Brosdal Report, March 29, 1957

Date: March 29, 1957

Time: 7:30 approx. (local)

Location: Over the Atlantic, about 50 mi. east of "Papa 3". 74° 20' W, 30° 00' N.

Observed from cockpit of Pan American flight #206A, flying Nassau to New York. Witnessed by crew members Kenneth G. Brosdal, pilot; George Jacobson, copilot; and John Wilbur, Engineer.

Flight had heading of 25 degrees (magnetic), saw object at compass bearing of 120 degrees relative. Apparent altitude was estimated at 20 - 25,000 feet.

Quoting Capt. Brosdal: "...I had another sighting on March 29 about 7:30 p.m. I don't remember the exact time, although it is logged in my navigation chart which was turned in.

"About 50 miles east of Papa-3 - a check point between Nassau and Tuna (sic) - we, the copilot, Engineer and myself, saw this very bright white light. It seemed to grow in intensity to the point where it would be about 3 or 4 strengths of a rising 'Venus,' then would subside. This happened about three or four times, during which I came to enough to check on the radar screen. Sure enough, a target showed up at 3 o'clock between 45 - 50 miles away. Using the curser on the face of the radar, I checked the angle of sighting and it checked with the visual angle.

"This light appeared to be stationary, or moving in a N.E. direction (same as us). I observed this on the scope long after the light went out.

"I checked with Miami ATC but no other traffic or firing was in the area, to their knowledge."

Captain Brosdal added that the visual observation lasted about 4-5 minutes, and the radar observation for 20 minutes. The blip on the scope indicated an apparent size in excess of the size of normal aircraft.

Information was gleaned through correspondence dated April 12 and May 18, 1957.

Additional data obtained in telephone communication June 3, 1957:

Plane was flying at 16,000 feet, through tops of cumulus clouds.

Engineer was in co-pilots seat; Brosdal called his attention to obj. first. Copilot was navigating, they called him to look.

No shape to light--no shape discernable from blip on scope, either. Blip stayed in same sector of scope for twenty minutes (meaning it must have been moving with the plane, same speed & distance all the while.) Scope was tuned to 50 miles range (3 ranges - 50 m., 100 m. & 150 m.).

Intensity of light was what impressed him most--got exceedingly bright, then dim, almost indiscernable--then resumed brightness. Did this 4 or 5 times.

Weather: "3/8 cumulus up to about 15,000 - 16,000 feet." Plane going thru tops of clouds.

Passangers not alerted--bunch of "loaded business men" returning from Nassau.

He will check on Monson sighting of March 26.

SATEL

(\$2.00 per Yr., in)

Vol. I - No. 3

NEW ORLEANS,

AIRLINE CREW SIGHTS UFO₁

March 29, 1957

(Off the East coast of Florida,
30° N. Latitude)

Pan American flight #206A, flying from Nassau to New York, was at 16,000 ft. moving through the tops of cumulus clouds on a heading of 25° (magnetic). The pilot was Capt. Kenneth G. Brosdal. The Engineer, John Wilbur, was in the co-pilot's seat. The co-pilot, George Jacobson, was navigating. It was about 7:30 P.M., Local Time.

Quoting Capt. Brosdal: "... About 50 miles east of Papa-3, a check point between Nassau and Tuna, we (the co-pilot, engineer and myself) saw this very bright white light. It seemed to grow in intensity to the point where it would be about 3 or 4 strengths of a rising 'Venus', then would subside. This happened about 3 or 4 times, during which I came to enough to check on the radar screen. Sure enough, a target showed up at 3 o'clock between 45-50 miles away.

Using the curser on the face of the radar, I checked the angle of sighting and it checked with the visual angle. This light appeared to be stationary, or moving in a N. E. direction (same as us). I observed this on the scope long after the light went out. I checked with Miami ATC (Air Traffic Control) but no other traffic or firing was in the area, to their knowledge."

Capt. Brosdal added that the visual observation lasted 4-5 minutes, and the radar observation for 20 min. The blip on the scope indicated an apparent size in excess of the size of normal aircraft. The apparent altitude of the light was estimated at 20-25,000 ft. There was no discernible shape to it. Capt. Brosdal was most im-

(Cont. on pg. 2, "Airline")

Coverage from Dick Hall's
College Student days
newsletter: Satellite
July 1, 1957.

("Airline", Cont.) pressed by the intensity of the light during the bright phase of pulsation. It got exceedingly bright.

The radar set, tuned to the 50 mile range, showed the blip in the same sector of the scope for 20 minutes.

Capt. Brosdal did not alert the passengers. (Editors Note: An astronomical explanation is ruled out because heavenly

1. Credit: Ted Blocher, C.S.I. New York, for

Loren Gross entry:

29 March. About 50 miles east of "Papa 3" check point (Atlantic Ocean)
The Capt. Ken Brosdal incident.

A strange fact that relates to the "meteor" case of March 8th was the appearance of another unidentified object in the sky over the Atlantic in the same general area on March 29th. The Air Force missed any press account and had to settle for a page cut from a civilian UFO newsletter, New York's CSI Bulletin, the information then placed in military files. Since the material was not obtained from an "official" source, it was put among the paperwork located at the end of the month in BLUE BOOK records. The Air Force creates some confusion about the date of the Ken Brosdal incident. The BLUE BOOK record shows a date change in this fashion: "8 ~~XX~~ March 1957." The number "29" was crossed out with two "Xs." If the military wanted to "play down" the March 8th case, this date change was no real help since it called attention to the similarities between the two UFO cases. Another odd thing is that the prime witness to the March 29th manifestation was PAA Captain Ken Brosdal, one of the witnesses to the March 8th episode.

The story as reported in the CSI Bulletin:

"March 29 1957: Piloting Pan American Flight #206A from Nassau to New York, Captain Ken Brosdal and two of his crew watched a UFO both visually and on radar as it 'dogged' them at their speed, moving in the same direction, southeast of their plane. At about 7:30 p.m. their position was 74° 20' West, 30° North; they were flying at 16,000 feet through the tops of cumulus clouds. John Wilbur, the engineer, was in the co-pilot's seat; co-pilot George Jacobson was navigating, and saw the object first." (25.)

CSI then quotes a statement submitted by Capt. Brosdal:

"About 50 miles east of Papa 3 - a check point between Nassau and Tuna - the co-pilot, engineer and myself saw a very bright white light. It seemed to grow in intensity to the point where it would be about three or four times as strong as Venus rising and would then subside. This happened three or four times; meanwhile, I 'came to' enough to check the radar screen. Sure enough, a target showed up at 3 o'clock, 45 to 50 miles away. Using the cursor on the face of the radar, I checked the angle of the sighting and it checked with the visual angle.

"The light appeared to be stationary (on the scope), or moving in a northeast direction the same as us). We watched the light visually for about four or five minutes, and on radar for twenty minutes." (26.)

The CSI editor added:

"Neither the light nor the blip had any definite shape; the radar image indicated that it was larger than a normal aircraft. The scope was tuned to a 50-mile range. What impressed Captain Brosdal most was the intensity of the light in its bright phases. After perhaps four cycles of brightening and dimming, the light faded out slowly and completely. Captain Brosdal did not alert the passengers, and apparently no one in the cabin of the plane saw it." (27.)