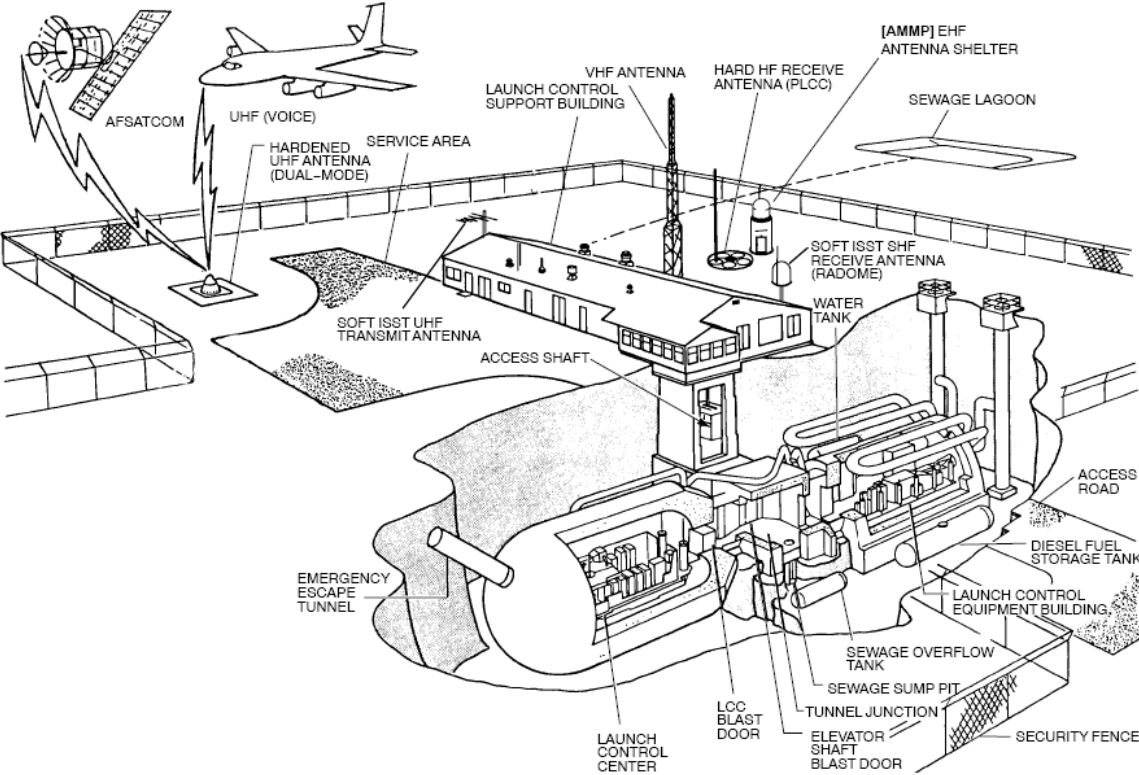


# ECHO FLIGHTS OF FANTASY

## ANATOMY OF A UFO HOAX

BY JAMES CARLSON



***The author of this article, James Carlson, is the son of Captain (Retired) Eric D. Carlson, the commander of Echo Flight on March 16, 1967. All of the details and descriptions of events and reports that his father would have been witness to have been confirmed by him as accurate.***

On September 27, 2010, in an attempt to build support for the disclosure of UFO-related documents by the U.S. Department of Defense, authors Robert Hastings and Robert Salas hosted a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Only confirmed members of the press and Congressional staff were invited to attend. With them were seven veterans of the U.S. military who have publically affirmed the interference by UFOs with nuclear facilities in the United States and Europe. According to Hastings and Salas, this proves that the claim of the United States Air Force since 1969 that UFO activity has never had an effect on the national security of the U.S. is a lie. Out of all of the witnesses present, *three* had come forward to discuss their involvement with a well-known case that allegedly occurred at Malmstrom AFB, Montana in the spring of 1967: the Echo Flight incident of March 16, and an associated event at Oscar Flight on March 24-25. Since first being exposed to public scrutiny by Robert Salas in 1995, this alleged confrontation between UFO and nuclear missile silos has come to be considered one of ten UFO incidents around the world that is best supported by the most reliable evidence. Questions raised regarding the credibility of the witnesses insist, however, that this notoriety is hardly deserved.

According to Robert Salas, co-author with James Klotz of *Faded Giant*, which purports to discuss the Echo Flight event, UFOs reported over two flights – each equipped with ten nuclear missiles – interfered with the normal operation of the flights by taking all of the missiles off of strategic alert, thereby rendering them temporarily unavailable to U.S. forces. When Robert Salas, the primary witness to this event, first made public this case in 1995, he asserted that *he* was present at Echo Flight as the deputy commander on duty, who, with the commander, was required to monitor the missiles and fire them, if necessary, at pre-selected targets in the Soviet Union and China. This small, two-man capsule crew was embedded in a chamber 60-100 feet beneath the surface of the Montana plains. It was very well protected, because the crew needed to survive a first-strike scenario in order to retaliate should a nuclear exchange occur. It was in this environment that Robert Salas posited UFO interference with America's

primary nuclear deterrent of the 1960s, and he did so by redefining an actual event that the U.S. Department of Defense was, in the 1960s and 1970s, extremely concerned about keeping secret, not because of UFOs, but due to the inherent nature of deterrent forces. In the original USAF records discussing this event, it is characterized as the *Echo Flight Incident*.

USAF records indicate that the Echo Flight Incident occurred at 0845 on the morning of March 16, 1967, about two hours after sunrise. The events that occurred were summarized in September 1969 in Bernard C. Nalty's *USAF Ballistic Missile Programs 1967-1968*, a TOP SECRET NOFORN document discussing problems encountered by U.S. missile forces: "Another problem ... appeared in March 1967 when an entire flight of Minuteman I missiles at Malmstrom went abruptly off alert. Extensive tests at Malmstrom, Ogden Air Materiel Area, and at the Boeing plant in Seattle revealed that an electronic noise pulse had shut down the flight. In effect, this surge of noise was similar to the electromagnetic pulse generated by nuclear explosions. The component of Minuteman I that was most vulnerable to noise pulse was the logic coupler of the guidance and control system. Subsequent tests showed that the same part in Minuteman II was equally sensitive to this same phenomenon."

The incident is discussed in some detail in other documents as well, notably the 341st Strategic Missile Wing and Combat Support Group Command History: "On 16 March 1967 at 0845, all sites in Echo (E) Flight, Malmstrom AFB, shutdown with No-Go indications of Channel 9 and 12 on Voice Reporting Signal Assemble (VRSA). All LF's in E Flight lost strategic alert nearly simultaneously."

These statements are clear, straightforward, and very specific, as almost all of the official documents discussing the incident are, so why, exactly, are UFOs thought to have been involved? The documents certainly don't attribute the cause to UFOs – they are all very clear, as such records generally are. If this event is one of the ten UFO incidents around the world that is best supported by the most reliable evidence, *where is the evidence?* And where did Salas' version of this incident originate, if not with the incident itself?

According to Robert Salas, in the early 1990s, he read Timothy Good's book *Above Top Secret*, which contains a reference to research conducted by NICAP investigator Raymond Fowler regarding a UFO that was reported by above ground personnel and confirmed by radar at Malmstrom AFB sometime "during the week of 20 March 1967." Fowler insists that these UFO reports were made coincident to the

missiles failures at Echo Flight, and mentions as well a “nearly identical” event that occurred at Malmstrom AFB the previous year. Good concludes that while neither of these incidents were actually *confirmed* as UFO reports, he sees “no reason to doubt” them.

It was after reading Good’s book that Salas allegedly remembered his own involvement with a UFO that took out the entire flight of missiles that were, at the time, under his care as the deputy commander of the flight. With the assistance of the Computer UFO Network (CUFON) founded by Dale Goudie and James Klotz, he drafted a series of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the U.S. Air Force addressing the need for a declassification review of any documents detailing missile failures at Malmstrom AFB “on or about 25 March 1967.” The date suggests that Salas searched area newspapers for UFO incidents reported sometime around “the week of 20 March 1967”, as noted in Good’s book, discovering thereby the well-known Belt, Montana UFO event and associated UFO sightings at Malmstrom AFB on March 24-25, 1967. Since this represents the *only* UFO sightings during the month of March 1967 in the entire state of Montana, it’s reasonable to assume that this was the rationale behind the date used on Salas’ FOIA requests. In any case, as a result of his letters, the USAF sent Salas information pertaining to the Echo Flight Incident of March 16, 1967, specifically, portions of the 341st Strategic Missile Wing and Combat Support Group Command History for that quarter.

According to an article entitled “Minuteman Missiles Shutdown” that Salas published in the *MUFON UFO Journal* in 1997, “When we received this information, I assumed that I was in the Echo capsule during this incident because the events of the incident were very similar to my recollection.” This *recollection*, summarized in the same article, establishes that “while on duty as a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander (DMCCC) at a Minuteman Launch Control Facility (LCF) during the morning hours, I received a call from my NCO in charge of site security topside. He said that he and other guards had observed some unidentified flying objects in the vicinity.” These UFOs could only be distinguished as “lights” at the time, but they had flown over the LCF (also called the LCC, or launch control center) a few times and had caught the attention of the NCO on duty. In later versions of the story, Salas insisted that the UFOs were making maneuvers that normal aircraft could not make. He also insists that he did not take the report very seriously, and told the NCO to call back if something more significant occurred.

"Five or ten minutes later, I received a second call ... he was much more agitated and distraught. He stated that there was a UFO hovering just outside the front gate! ... As we were talking, he said he had to go because one of the guards had been injured." Salas hung up and immediately awakened his commander, who was, at the time, on his rest period.

"Within seconds, our missiles began shutting down from 'Alert' status to 'No-Go' status. I recalled that most, if not all, of our missiles had shut down in rapid succession. Normally, if a missile went off alert status, it was due to a power outage at a particular site and the site power generator would come on line and pick up the power load and the LF would come back on line. It was extremely rare for more than one missile to go off line for any length of time. In this case, none of our missiles came back on line. The problem was not lack of power; some signal had been sent to the missiles which caused them to go off alert." According to Salas, the guard who had been injured had to be evacuated by helicopter. The UFO itself was described as having "a red glow and appeared to be saucer-shaped."

*None of these claims, like those made by Raymond Fowler as delineated in Timothy Good's book, have ever been confirmed.* Salas agrees that neither he nor the commander of the flight saw anything, because they were underground in the capsule, and none of the enlisted security personnel have ever come forward to confirm this dramatic event. As for supporting documentation, there is none, not even a record of the one guard having been injured and subsequently evacuated by helicopter.

Robert Salas' original claims regarding Echo Flight soon proved to have been made in error as a result of the fact that he had never actually *served* at Echo Flight. He soon altered his claims sufficiently, however, by stating that he had simply made a mistake. In the 341st Strategic Missile Wing and Combat Support Group Command History sent to Salas as a result of his FOIA request, it states that, "Rumors of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) around the area of Echo Flight during the time of fault were disproven. A Mobile Strike Team, which had checked all November Flight's LFs (launch facilities) on the morning of 16 March 67, were questioned and stated that no unusual activity or sightings were observed." According to Salas, upon reading this excerpt, he recalled something his commander had said during the incident. "After we reported the incident to the command post, he had received a call from another LCC. After that call he turned to me and said, 'The same thing happened at another flight.' With this 'new' recollection, I began to question if I was at Echo during the time of our incident since I knew I was assigned to the 490<sup>th</sup>

Squadron, which did not have responsibility for Echo Flight.” It was actually the 10<sup>th</sup> SMS that had manning responsibility for Echo Flight.

In an August 12, 1996 email correspondence with Raymond Fowler, the same NICAP investigator referred to by Timothy Good in *Above Top Secret*, Salas’ version of this recollection is slightly different: “I did and do have a vivid recollection of my commander speaking to another flight that day and then saying to me that ‘the same thing had happened at their flight.’ However, I had been under the impression up until now that what he had meant was that it happened to them at some other time period. I now believe it was the same day because of the rapid response of the maintenance crews to our site. I believe they had already been dispatched to Echo before our shutdown.” This commentary is significant, because it establishes as “a vivid recollection” that the flight that called was the same flight that had been subjected to the UFO interference under discussion: *Echo Flight*. It also establishes that the incident at Echo Flight occurred *before* the event described by Salas at the flight under his care. In this same message, he also states that “I still do not recall, for certain the name of my Commander during this incident.” In other words, he is confident regarding the incident and the time frame, but he has nonetheless presented no confirmation.

In an August 2 communication, however, Salas states “In addition, I had not told you this before, I recall hearing thru the rumor mill, soon after my incident, that ours had not been the first full shutdown.” This is an interesting comment from someone who claimed only ten days later that he had “a vivid recollection” of being told that “the same thing had happened at their flight” *during* his watch, not “after my incident,” and that his source for this information was not “thru the rumor mill,” but from his own commander. It’s possible, of course, that Salas’ “vivid recollection” didn’t come about *immediately* upon reading the excerpt regarding “Rumors of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO)”, but gelled for a week or so while he considered the possibilities presented by the “rumor mill”. If that’s the case, it’s not unreasonable to wonder how *vivid* his recollection could have been.

Salas claims in his 1997 article that an unnamed friend told him in 1996 that he was definitely *not* the deputy commander at Echo Flight on March 16, 1967, confirming thereby his suspicions that he had *not* served at Echo Flight, and leading to his eventual revelation that he had been at *November Flight*, the only other flight of missiles mentioned in the command history documents. This friend also told Salas the

names of the commander and deputy commander who actually *were* on duty at Echo Flight, and told him as well the name of his own commander: *Colonel (Retired) Frederick Meiwald*. With this information, Salas tracked down his one-time commander, and apparently received from him the confirmation he was looking for regarding the alleged UFO's interference with the flight's missiles.

Well, *maybe* ...

As previously mentioned, the August 12, 1996 correspondence between Salas and Raymond Fowler indicates that Salas had already decided that he had been at *November Flight* when the incident he remembers occurred, and that he had not yet determined the identity of his commander at that time. In a later communication with Fowler, one written *after* he contacted Meiwald, he states that he had neglected to ask Meiwald what flight they were in at that time, adding, however, that it was probably November Flight. So if Salas had already decided that they were at November Flight, and therefore did not ask Meiwald about the flight they were attached to, as the correspondence indicates, what else did he simply not bother to confirm when he finally contacted him? Questions like this make it somewhat difficult to ascertain what specific details of his story had actually been *confirmed* by Meiwald once Salas contacted him again after so many years. The recollection that Meiwald had told him "the same thing had happened at their flight" was also Salas' alone, as his article for the *MUFON UFO Journal* clearly states, so it is not inappropriate to wonder whether or not Meiwald actually confirmed *that* memory, or did Salas simply not bother to mention it? Salas fails to go into any details at all regarding Meiwald's confirmation of this incident, asserting only that Meiwald has confirmed his account of the UFO interference with the missiles under their care. One cannot help but wonder why Meiwald has not appeared at any UFO conventions or even the recent press conference organized by Salas and Robert Hastings if he has indeed confirmed all of the events detailed by Salas since 1995. Did he, for instance, confirm any of the numerous errors of fact that Salas has been forced to correct over the years? Was he the *author* of any of them? *How much, exactly, is his confirmation of this event really worth?*

According to Robert Hastings, "Salas' former missile commander, now-retired Col Fredrick Meiwald, has confirmed that it [the missile failures incident at Oscar Flight] did indeed happen and that the missile security guards who had been sent out to investigate tripped alarms at two of the missile sites

just after the incident saw something that scared them to death. Meiwald elaborated on all of this in an October 1, 1996 letter to Salas". *But is this actually true?* Examination of this letter, as well as with the transcripts of a conversation Meiwald had with Salas during the same period suggests otherwise. The first statement to take note of is Meiwald's *qualifier*: "The info you provided is very interesting but I have slightly different memories – which could easily be incorrect as they say, 'The memory is the second thing to go.'" This is *extremely* important, primarily because Salas himself apparently paid little heed to the information and events that Meiwald actually discusses. For instance, Meiwald insists that "Our home site was Oscar." He also insists that the UFO event he discusses occurred when they were at Oscar Flight. It would, however, be another *three years* after receiving this letter before Salas would agree, asserting until 1999 that he and Meiwald were at *November Flight* when the UFO incident he recalls occurred. This is not an insignificant oversight. Meiwald very clearly remembers an incident involving the possible report of a UFO, but he comes nowhere near to actually confirming that this incident is the *same one* that Salas has reported. The fact that Salas refused to acknowledge Meiwald's memories of their location during the incident, also speaks volumes in relation to this issue. It's questionable whether Meiwald is describing anything at all in relation to the missile failures event, a conclusion supported by Salas' insistence for three years that the missile failures occurred at November Flight.

In Meiwald's 1996 letter, the incident he describes seems pretty definitive: "Related to the incident itself, I recall us being at the Oscar LCF. Topside security notified us the mobile team had reported observing the 'UFO' while responding (obviously at your direction) to a situation at an outlying LF – this particular one being located just east of Highway 19, the state highway which runs north from Grass Range to the Missouri River. With little or no direction from higher authority (Command Post or Alternate Command Post), the Security team was directed to return to the LCF, maintaining radio contact at all times, as the security system reset. While enroute [sic] back to the LCF, radio contact was lost and remained out until the security vehicle approached the LCF. Two very upset young men wasted no time getting back inside." Meiwald adds that "I do not recall personnel injury of any type but the two individuals were sent back to the support base early. I heard second-hand that one was released from security team duties. I do not recall any follow-up activities by any Wing personnel."



Both Robert Hastings and Robert Salas expect the world to believe that this is Meiwald's confirmation of the missile failures event at Oscar Flight (or November Flight, depending on how far back in the evolution of Salas' current assertions the reader wishes to go), that allegedly occurred on March 24-25, 1967 coincident to the UFO sighting. *Examination of the testimony presented, however, shows that these claims are nonsense.*

Nowhere does Meiwald insist that the event he describes occurred in conjunction with any missile failures at all, although his memory of the event is remarkably detailed, particularly in relation to the environment and the location of the launch facility under investigation. This holds true as well for the transcripts Hastings has published of the telephone conversation that Salas conducted with Meiwald in 1996. His statement could very easily stand on its own without any of the missile failures that only Salas correlates with *this* incident. In the fifteen years since these communications took place, Salas has been completely unable to produce a definitive confirmation from *anybody*, and one can't help but wonder *why*. After all, Meiwald is certainly still *alive*, so why is his confirmation so *ambiguous*? It makes much more sense to assume that Meiwald is referring to an incident that has nothing whatsoever to do with the event Salas in turn has described. What Meiwald *does* discuss, however, are a series of events that make it *impossible* to correlate his description with anything other than a general, and relatively minor, security alert of the same type that occurs often at such facilities.

In addition, Meiwald describes *nothing* that substantiates a UFO presence. In fact, if there actually *had* been such an extensive number of missile failures during the event described, Meiwald would most assuredly have been able to produce more details in relation to it. After all, had missile failures actually occurred coincident to this event, the *capsule crew*, Meiwald and Salas presumably, would have been *giving* the orders, not *hearing* about them second-hand. They would have been in constant communication with the teams sent out to determine missile status – *exactly as occurred at Echo Flight a week earlier*. Such an event would have required the deployment of maintenance personnel in addition to their security escorts, because it's necessary to gain access to the lower equipment room at each LF to determine missile status – an operation that takes a minimum of 30-40 minutes to complete. The incident that Meiwald describes, however, is very clearly being run from the Command Post, which is the direct chain of command for security personnel. This is why there was no

direct communication going on between the capsule crew and security team, which is exactly the procedure that took place at Echo Flight. *Everything* that Meiwald discusses was the result of updates originating with the Command Post. Nothing at all about the alleged UFO was communicated directly, and none of it came from the actual security team that was given the assignment. It should be noted as well that the two-man security teams Meiwald describes were used to check on minor physical security alerts; without maintenance technicians, however, they could not be expected to carry out the duties required in the course of a *missile failure*.

The security personnel simply went out to check on a physical security alert, a response confirmed by Meiwald's insistence that the security system had to be reset. This type of alert happened all of the time; bears rubbing up against the fence would cause the same alert, and even birds were known to set off the alarms. *It was a common part of the security routine*, which is why nobody thought it necessary to have the capsule crew put in charge of it. This interpretation is also supported by Meiwald's allusion to the Command Post checklist. The example of Echo Flight proves that missile failures require the *capsule crew* to follow procedures dictated on a checklist, *not* the Command Post. Missile failures would have also required a great deal of "direction from higher authority", contrary to what Meiwald affirms, since the extent of such authority increases with the importance of the incident. A physical security response, being so common and somewhat expected by those manning the Command Post, is far less important than multiple losses of nuclear missiles to strategic forces. Nowhere does Meiwald discuss the realization of any duties required by the capsule crew upon the acknowledgement of missile failures.

While there may well have been a UFO involved with the incident Meiwald describes in his letter, no certainty can be attached to this supposition, because nobody has interviewed the actual witnesses, no reports were ever filed in recognition of the event, and no investigation was ever conducted as required by regulations effective since September 1966. Even the story Salas and Hastings insist upon regarding the one security member who was permanently retired from the job is "second hand," as Meiwald readily admits in his letter, investing it with qualities more suggestive of an archetypal allusion than a tangible, historical event. In the end, we can say with some confidence that while a UFO may or may not have been an influential factor, the failure of numerous missiles coincidental to this event

unquestionably did *not* occur. Had it done so, Meiwald and Salas would have been a lot busier, as their colleagues were at Echo Flight a week earlier. It's difficult to believe that someone with the experience Robert Salas claims to have would *ever* use this as a confirmation for anything, let alone a missile failure event at Oscar Flight.

Taking into consideration Meiwald's assertion that "This probably does not assist your efforts in any way", it's far more likely that he's describing the only UFO encounter that he has any memory of at all, and Robert Salas has simply adopted it as a confirmation for the Oscar Flight event, an easy task as a result of Meiwald's inability to *date* the event he describes. There's *nothing* in either Meiwald's letter or in the transcripts Robert Hastings has published of Meiwald's conversation with Salas that can actually be called a *confirmation* of the event Salas describes. Meiwald insists that he does not remember anyone being injured in any confrontation with a UFO, and he only mentions two security team members who *may* have had some sort of confrontation. It certainly doesn't match the event Salas describes in which the Command Post was emptied of all personnel, armed and ready for any ensuing battle that might take place. In fact, Meiwald fails to mention this event at all, making it questionable at best. Why would he remember a couple of security updates from the Command Post in such detail, yet *not* the far more dramatic episode Salas describes? *None* of this can be called a believable confirmation. The fact that Salas would even introduce this corruption of a man's memories as some kind of a confirmation for the ridiculous incident he describes says more about his inability to substantiate the event he continues to discuss than it does the event itself. The one thing that's most apparent in all of this is that Meiwald has *not* confirmed the missile shutdown scenario described by Hastings and Salas. He only barely confirms a second-hand report of a possible UFO sighting on an unknown date.

If Meiwald does not confirm the incident of missile failures, we once again find ourselves in the position of one forced to believe incredible claims on the basis of absolutely *nothing*, aside from Salas' own resolve. In addition, it's decidedly *odd* that the details characteristic of Meiwald's confirmation as reported by Salas tend to *change in close correlation* to those adopted and subsequently incorporated into the ever-evolving version of the event Salas describes – a characteristic that also fails to include any direct quotes whatsoever originating with Colonel (Retired) Frederick Meiwald correlating the missile failures with the UFO allegedly sighted by the two security personnel. The only useful assertion that can

be truthfully made is that Robert Salas insists that Meiwald has confirmed the incident at hand; Meiwald has certainly *not* done so for himself.

There are other suggestions as well that Salas may not be reporting Meiwald's actual recollections with adequate precision. In a 1996 email to Raymond Fowler, Salas reveals that Meiwald thought only *four* missiles were actually taken off strategic alert, not all ten as his own "memories" insisted. In the article he published a year later, Salas states that Meiwald "confirmed my recollection of events with the exception that he recalled that about *five* of our ten missiles shut down in rapid succession." By December 2000, however, when Salas was interviewed in conjunction with the *Disclosure Project*, he claimed that upon "recalling this incident with my commander Mywald [sic], he said he felt we only lost maybe seven or eight of these weapons." If Meiwald was the source of these estimations, it would seem that he has been as inconsistent regarding his claims as Salas has.

In order to clarify this and other questions, the author of this article sought out, eventually found, and contacted Colonel (Retired) Frederick Meiwald for himself. Unfortunately, Colonel Meiwald insists that he does not remember the incident very well, although he does agree that there seem to be a lot of discrepancies in Salas' discussion of the events he allegedly witnessed. As for what he has or has not confirmed, he is somewhat less confident. "Did this situation involve 'UFOs'? I don't know. I personally have never seen one and really have doubts about their existence, but who am I to question others' 'observations'?" This, unfortunately, is not the satisfactory conclusion many investigators into matters like this generally insist upon. In answer to a later request for more information, Meiwald was again very congenial, but insisted that "Trying to remember events of over 40 years ago is not my *forté*." As a result, no questions were answered, and no explanations were offered. This last communication was in September 2009. Clarity, it seems, is still a need that has yet to be fulfilled by the *only* witness to these events that has even come *close* to confirming the story Salas tells.

According to Salas, Meiwald also verified that it was the crew of Echo Flight who had called him on March 16, 1967, after which the commander told Salas, "the same thing had happened at their flight." Everything seems to have fallen neatly into place for Salas very nicely, a result he happily documented:

"I was able to locate and speak with both crew members of Echo, the commander of the Echo relief crew, and my own commander.

"As a result of these conversations, more information was revealed. The Echo MCCC related to me that prior to the shutdown of all his missiles he had received more than one report from security patrols and maintenance crews that they had seen UFOs. One was directly above one of the LFs in Echo Flight. The Echo crew confirmed that they had spoken to my commander that day and told him of their incident. They also told me that they were flown to SAC headquarters, Omaha, Nebraska the next day and had to brief CINCSAC (Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command) about their incident. The Echo DMCCC also informed me that he had written an extensive log of the Incident and turned that over to staff officers at SAC headquarters. They certainly did report the UFO sightings and their guards and maintenance personnel were interviewed about their sightings by Air Force investigators. The MCCC of the crew that relieved the Echo crew also confirmed that the Echo crew had spoken to him about the UFO sightings during the time immediately preceding their shutdown incident."

In other words, a UFO was responsible for the both the Echo Flight Incident referred to in Nalty's USAF Ballistic Missile Programs 1967-1968 and for the incident at November Flight that Salas and Meiwald supposedly remember – an incident that *also* occurred on March 16, 1967, but had never been mentioned by *anybody*, either officially or unofficially, prior to Salas' claims made to Raymond Fowler nearly 30 years later in 1996.

There are, however, some very significant problems with the story that Robert Salas has told that are unrelated to the alleged confirmation he received from Colonel (Retired) Frederick Meiwald:

(1) The original documents Salas received state only that "Rumors of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) around the area of Echo Flight during the time of fault were disproven." The loss of the ten missiles that went off of strategic alert was very well documented, as was the investigation that followed, but there has been no mention anywhere that a UFO was reported until Salas' own claims were made public. There is also no mention of any similar loss of missiles at any other flight on March 16, 1967, or, for that matter, at any other time discussed in any other document published since.

(2) The Echo Flight MCCC, Captain (Retired) Eric D. Carlson, insists that he received *no* reports of UFOs from *anybody*, before or after the missiles were taken off of strategic alert. In a September 2010

statement issued well before the press conference of September 27 organized by Hastings and Salas, Carlson strongly reaffirmed this, adding that he said the same thing to a news reporter in Great Falls, Montana who questioned him about Salas' claims in 1996, and to the producer of "Sightings", a cable television series about the UFO phenomenon that featured a discussion of Salas' claims that was originally aired in March 1997. Carlson has, in fact, been extraordinarily consistent in his claims regarding the Echo Flight Incident, having insisted for years that no UFOs were involved, reported, or investigated in relation to Echo Flight. In a series of email messages that Salas sent to Raymond Fowler in 1996, he mentions both interviews with Carlson, but tells Fowler that Carlson *confirmed* his UFO claims. In this same correspondence, Salas is very insistent that a member of the Echo Flight crew was required to give the episode of "Sightings" the necessary veneer of credibility. Unfortunately, while he admits to Fowler that Carlson both confirmed the UFO aspect of the story and was willing to be interviewed for that particular episode, he insists as well that the producer of the show did *not*, for some reason, feel that Carlson would be a very good witness. As a result, the March 1997 episode was forced to air interviews with only Salas, James Klotz, and Don Crawford, the DMCCC of the crew that *relieved* Carlson and Figel a few hours *after* the incident. Carlson believes that the producer refused to interview him because he insisted that UFOs were *not* involved. His claims, in fact, are *completely* contrary to Salas' own, so the fact that Salas has publically insisted otherwise, as recently as the press conference of September 27, 2010, is not exactly reassuring for anybody desiring to know exactly *what happened* in March 1967. It is, in fact, extremely difficult to get past this incessant suggestion that Salas *lied* to Raymond Fowler on more than one occasion in 1996, at the very beginning of his UFO-oriented vocation. It should be mentioned that Raymond Fowler's support at this very early stage of Salas' mission to establish his claims as factual would have been considered quite an accomplishment by anybody. Fowler is considered to be something of a legend in the UFO-proponent communities, having worked closely with well-known and respected individuals like Dr. J. Allen Hynek, who lauded Fowler's dedication and attention to detail in his 1972 book *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Enquiry*.

(3) Both Captain (Retired) Eric D. Carlson and the DMCCC of Echo Flight, Colonel (Retired) Walter Figel, Jr., insist that they did *not* communicate with *any* of the LCC crews, let alone November Flight's commander, because they were far too busy to do so once the Echo Flight missiles started going

off of strategic alert. Carlson and Figel reiterated their claims both verbally and in writing in September 2010. In addition, November Flight was manned by another missile squadron, the 490<sup>th</sup> SMS, making it SAC's responsibility to inform them about *anything*, not Echo Flight's. There would have been no reason for *anyone* at Echo Flight to call *anyone* at November Flight, and this very routine communications protocol has been a consistent aspect of U.S. military structure and authority since before World War Two. This, of course, calls into question Salas' insistence in 1996-97 that Meiwald spoke to the MCCC of Echo Flight, and then told Salas that "the same thing had happened at their flight." In subsequent versions of this story, Salas has stated that the phone call came from another LCC, but *not* Echo Flight, the phone call came from SAC, the information was passed after *Meiwald* called SAC to report the missile failures, the information was passed to Salas by an unnamed individual *after* his watch ended and therefore had nothing at all to do with Meiwald, and, most recently, that he didn't find out about the events at Echo Flight until a week later, and then it was passed to him by an unnamed individual after his watch ended and he had slept until the following day. Inconsistency is, in fact, an integral part of Robert Salas' claims, and one cannot help but wonder once again: *what exactly does Meiwald confirm?*

(4) Neither Carlson nor Figel were flown to SAC headquarters the next day to brief *anybody*; their actions before and during the incident were a matter for the investigation team, and all such interviews remained on that level. Both men reaffirmed this as well in September 2010, with Carlson insisting that, "The only conversation I ever had was with the senior controller and that was by phone."

(5) Both Carlson and Figel insist that their watch turnover to the relieving crew did not include any mention whatsoever of UFOs, because UFOs were not involved in the incident, nor were any reported. Both officers also reaffirmed this in September 2010, with Figel adding that his turnover included everything that was written in the logbook: there was "a hand written log from me that was turned in just like all the other logs that I wrote over several years", and, according to Figel, that handwritten log contained no mention of UFOs at all.

(6) There were no reports by *anybody* about *anything* preceding the Echo Flight shutdown incident, which both Carlson and Figel reaffirmed in September 2010 as well. In 2006, Robert Salas and Robert Hastings adjusted their claims somewhat, asserting that the first report of a UFO came in *after* the missiles had already started to go off strategic alert, not *before*, basing this change on an interview

conducted with Colonel (Retired) Walter Figel, Jr. Both Carlson and Figel, however, have very clearly insisted that *this* version of the story is *also* wrong; both officers insist that UFOs were *never* reported. This confusion is a result entirely of Robert Hastings' insistence that the mere mention of the word "UFO", in the context of a weak joke told by a maintenance technician who was asleep when the missiles started going offline, qualifies as an official UFO report. This theory has no merit whatsoever, primarily because an actual UFO report would have been forwarded as the signed testimony of the witness for further investigation by the Malmstrom AFB UFO officer, Colonel Lewis D. Chase, as regulations demanded. This did *not* occur, so very obviously, no report was made.

In 1999, Robert Salas readjusted his version of these events once more, insisting that he was *not* at November Flight when the missiles were taken off of strategic alert, presumably as Meiwald had confirmed three years earlier, but at *Oscar Flight*. He still asserted, however, that UFOs were reported at *both* missile sites -- E-Flight *and* O-Flight -- on March 16, 1967, although no UFO sightings were recorded in the region by anybody on that date. There is also no mention anywhere of numerous missiles failing at any time at November Flight *or* Oscar Flight, whether the result of UFOs or anything else. It's apparent that Salas was now making claims that had never been convincingly confirmed by *anybody*. It should be noted as well that the 341<sup>st</sup> Strategic Missile Wing and Combat Support Group History that the USAF sent to Salas as a result of his original FOIA request states that "All LFs in E-Flight lost strategic alert nearly simultaneously. No other Wing I configuration lost strategic alert at that time." Since both November Flight *and* Oscar Flight were Wing I stations, this is a decidedly peculiar declaration to include in the official history of a USAF command if it was, in fact, *untrue*, as Salas insisted for the next five years.

By December 2000, when Salas was interviewed in conjunction with the *Disclosure Project*, a number of further discrepancies in his various claims had already been noted by critics. In 1997, for example, he states that the event he remembers took place sometime in the morning, and that the MCCC of Echo called Meiwald and told him about the missiles and the UFO that was noted at Echo Flight. This plainly indicates that the Echo incident occurred *before* the November-Oscar incident. Salas even wrote Fowler in 1996 in reference to the "rapid response of the maintenance crews to our site" that "I believe they had already been dispatched to Echo before our shutdown." And yet, the *Disclosure Project* interview states that it "was still dark out" when the Oscar Flight incident took place. The Echo Flight



Incident, however, started at 0845, about two hours after sunrise. In other interviews, both before and after December 2000, Salas made the same claim, repeatedly insisting that it was dark outside, or that it was very early in the morning, a condition that would enable the security guards in his story to observe the “lights” making odd maneuvers that an aircraft was not capable of making. These are descriptions that go back to his original claims, even while he was still declaring that he had been on duty at Echo Flight. Details of this sort make it difficult to believe that he even bothered to *read* the documents he received from the USAF.

In February 2006, Robert Hastings, author of *UFOs and Nukes*, wrote an article for NICAP that included a discussion of Oscar Flight: “When Salas and Klotz published their article ... some years ago, they believed that the two shutdown incidents had occurred within the same 24-period, on March 16, 1967. As my article points out, Klotz still believes that. However, Salas now agrees with me that they probably occurred on two separate days. This alternate time-line is based on the testimony of my source, Bob Jamison. In light of that, I propose that the Oscar Flight shutdown probably took place on the night of March 24/25, 1967 – the same night as the Belt, MT incident.” And suddenly, witness testimony turns into a *group effort*. In the American justice system, evidence of this sort is routinely dismissed as unduly prejudicial. When such evidence is used by civil authority, it’s considered prosecutorial misconduct and can be used to dismiss all related charges. In American UFOlogy, it’s considered by some to be a clearly stellar bit of investigative analysis.

In any case, after *ten years* of asserting the primary facts of an incident that were clearly impossible, Salas had finally accepted a solution that could explain discrepancies in the time frame, as well as the command history’s insistence that “No other Wing I configuration lost strategic alert at that time.” He still insisted, however, that UFOs were sighted over *both* flights, contradicting the claims of the entire Echo Flight crew that no UFOs were sighted, reported, or investigated in connection with that event. And if a UFO *had* been reported, USAF regulations would have *required* Colonel Chase, the base UFO officer, to investigate. The fact that there was no such investigation indicates that there was no UFO reported. When asked about it later, Chase was adamant that UFOs were *not* reported or investigated at Echo Flight. The combined efforts of Salas and now Hastings had made any discussion of actual *history* unnecessary, almost as if “history” was no longer important; the only thing that mattered was trying to

keep the participation of UFOs involved in the Echo Flight Incident, because it was the *only* incident these UFO “investigators” could even *hope* to verify. After all, if common wisdom could place UFOs at Echo Flight on March 16, 1967, the creation from *absolutely nothing* of a new event at Oscar Flight on March 24-25, 1967 would at least seem *possible*, if extremely unlikely.

Salas’ insistence that both Carlson and Figel “certainly did report the UFO sightings and their guards and maintenance personnel were interviewed about their sightings by Air Force investigators” has not been confirmed by *anyone*, while Carlson and Figel have *both* denied that UFOs were involved, making Salas’ claims somewhat problematic. There is also no evidence to suggest that “guards and maintenance personnel were interviewed about their sightings by Air Force investigators.” There are no records of such interviews, and nobody has ever come forward in the intervening 43 years to confirm them. It appears that Salas’ claims regarding Echo Flight cannot be supported in any way. Even with Meiwald’s confirmation, enough doubts have been raised to show that this entire UFO incident was very carefully constructed from little more than Robert Salas’ imagination and Robert Hastings’ inability to differentiate between said imagination and reality. After all, the only witness is Salas, and contrary to his claims in 1996, he had never even *served* at Echo Flight.

In 2008, as a result of the author’s insistence that Figel’s previous testimony could not be used to verify the existence of a UFO at Echo Flight, Robert Hastings re-interviewed Colonel (Retired) Walter Figel, Jr. In the course of this interview, Figel described an incident involving a maintenance team that had been encamped at one of the LFs associated with Echo Flight. There were actually *three* maintenance teams with security escorts encamped overnight at three of the LFs, a condition confirmed by the command history documents. Figel told Hastings that he believed these teams were encamped in order to complete normal pre-scheduled maintenance. Numerous records and FOIA documents establish, however, that the Minuteman force had many problems related to the guidance and control modules and to the diesel generators that were used for emergency power in the event the civil power grid went down. It was estimated, however, that the repairs necessary could not be completed by late 1968, so they were rescheduled in conjunction with normal maintenance procedures. It seems likely that this was indeed the case, as Figel reported that at least one of the three LFs undergoing maintenance was on diesel power at the time. In his 2008 interview with Hastings, Figel also discusses how one

member of the maintenance team, upon being awakened at Figel's command by the security escort after the missiles started going off strategic alert (not *before* as originally claimed by Salas), was ordered to confirm the status of the missile. Figel reports that the maintenance team member checking the status called him on the SIN telephone at the LF to inform him that the missile was indeed off alert with a VRSA channel 9 No-Go indication. At the same time, the maintenance tech stated "It must be a UFO hovering over the site. I think I see one here."

Hastings does not mention that this maintenance technician could not have seen *anything* from where he was, because the SIN telephone that he was using was 6-10 feet underground in the lower equipment room adjacent to the LF silo. Nor does he mention that it takes a *minimum* of 30-45 minutes to open the blast doors and get down to the equipment room in order to check the missile status, as Figel had ordered. During this entire procedure, the security escort who had awakened the technician was required to monitor a 2-way radio on which he had already established an open communications link with Figel and Carlson; he reported nothing unusual either to Figel and Carlson inside the capsule or to his direct superiors in the command post. Hastings neglects to take any of this into consideration, and as a result insists that this mention of a UFO was an *actual report*, when it was very clearly nothing more than an offhand comment made in a joking manner. In March 2010, Figel confirmed this scenario, insisting that it was stated as a joke and interpreted as a joke, *exactly as he told Robert Hastings during the original interview*. Hastings still insists, however, that it qualifies as an actual UFO report, although the known facts suggest otherwise. Both Figel and Carlson disagree strongly with Hastings' analysis; neither the maintenance technician nor his security escort has ever come forward to offer statements of their own.

In addition to their reports regarding Echo Flight, both Carlson and Figel are equally confident that there were no incidents of missile failures at November Flight or Oscar Flight in March 1967, and that Robert Salas was never involved in *any* incidents involving numerous missile failures – a decidedly difficult impression for Salas to convincingly deny. Figel and Carlson are certain that had such an incident occurred, they would have heard about it, just as the missileers in every other squadron attached to Malmstrom AFB heard about the ten missile failures at Echo Flight.

A significant portion of Salas' argument relies on the command history he originally acquired in response to his FOIA requests. He has claimed that no cause for the failures could be found by the field investigation team assigned to the case, and page 38 of the FOIA documents published by Salas and James Klotz of CUFON appears to support this conclusion: "The only possible means that could be identified by the team involved a situation in which a coupler self test command occurred along with a partial reset within the coupler. This could feasible [sic] cause a VRSA 9 and 12 indication. This was also quite remote for all 10 couplers would have to have been partially reset in the same manner." On the basis of a personal letter from Bob Kaminsky, a member of the field test investigation team that first responded to the missile failures, Salas and Klotz have also insisted that the investigation was unable to reach any significant conclusions whatsoever in regard to a possible cause.

Neither of these suppositions, however, is technically accurate, as a simple examination of the pages Salas and Klotz *neglected* to publish makes clear. On page 42 of the same command history used by Salas and Klotz to support their UFO claims, it clearly states that "the only common item determined in this investigation was the LCC. The LCC power fault transmitted to the LFs on the hardened cable was considered the only power fault capable of causing the Echo Flight incident." This is a pretty significant conclusion to reach, especially in light of Kaminsky's insistence 30-years later that *no useful conclusions* were reached by his team. The command history is very clear that the field team was tasked to examine *only the LFs*, so their conclusion that the power fault must have originated in the LCC is indeed *very* significant. It also explains why the only cause Kaminsky's team could identify was one considered to be "quite remote". This is because their conclusion applies *only* to the LFs. *They were never tasked to examine the LCC*. That responsibility went to another team entirely, a condition that both Salas and Klotz must have been well-aware of, because it is mentioned on those pages of the command history they had copies of, but neglected to publish. Once again on page 42, it states, "The investigation teams at Malmstrom were unable to determine a logical cause for the incident. Further investigation in the area of shutdown results will be conducted in an effort to determine a possible cause of this incident. These studies will be conducted at the contractors [sic] facility and will be included in the next history." Even if Salas and Klotz never received any excerpts from the following quarterly history, there's no excuse for their claims of the past fifteen years that no cause for the shutdown could be determined, when they were

perfectly aware that the overall investigation of the incident was still in progress. Additionally, the fact that they neglected to publish any pages of the document suggesting the true scope of the investigation is not one that instills confidence in their research methods, nor in the conclusions they arrived at.

Also contrary to Kaminsky's claims, the commentary on pages 36-37 asserts a couple of tremendously important conclusions as to the ultimate cause: "Channel 50 data was extracted from sites E-7 and E-8 immediately after the shutdown of the entire flight. Analysis of this data determined that both sites were shutdown as a result of external influence to the G&C, no No-Go's were detected by the G&C." This is followed up by "As stated earlier, all 10 launch facilities shutdown with a VRSA channel 9 and 12 (G&C No-Go and Logic Coupler No-Go) recordings. Because of this consistency considerable investigation was expended in the Logic Coupler area. In the channel 50 analysis it was shown that the guidance section [also called G&C - guidance and control] did not experience a No-Go and therefore, it was felt that the VRSA channel 9 report was not valid. It is possible, however, for the Logic Coupler to generate both of these No-Go indications." This means that all ten LFs shutdown with VRSA channel 9 and 12 indications reported at the LCC. However, only VRSA channel 9 was reported at the 10 launch facilities, an indication verified by the channel 50 analysis. Only the Logic Coupler error being reported in the LCC could possibly account for both the VRSA channel 9 and 12 indications at the LCC, *and* the channel 9 No-Go indications noted at the LFs; it's plain that the original fault must have occurred there as well. These conclusions have been omitted *entirely* from Salas' discussion of the Echo Flight Incident, even after Hastings' interview with Colonel (Retired) Figel in 2008 confirmed that only VRSA channel 9 indications were reported at the LFs.

The discussion regarding the cause of the Echo Flight Incident continues in the 341st Strategic Missile Wing and Combat Support Group Command History covering April-June 1967. "During testing at Boeing, a 30 micro sec Pulse (-10 to 0 volt square wave) was placed on the Self Test Command (STC) line at the C-53P Coupler Logic Drawer interface (STC). Seven out of 10 separate applications of a single Pulse, would cause the system to shut down with a Channel 9 & 12 No-Go.

"Subsequent testing at Autonetics has resulted in the following explanation of what probably happens in the Coupler Logic Drawer. The Pulse inserted is long enough to initiate the Coupler Self test sequence within the C-53P. However, it is not of long enough duration to enable control lines to the

computer to place the computer in a Coupler test loop Mode. This causes the Coupler to issue a sequence error due to lack of coincidence between G&C and Coupler Modes. This sequence error, together with the action of two other flip flop outputs (M-17 & M-20), is sufficient to initiate the Coupler and G&C No-Go shut down.

"The effort at Boeing NRA was to determine the source and most likely path of noise Pulse to the Logic Coupler. The results of the Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) testing at the LF and Wing IV indicated that the Sensitive Information Network (SIN) were susceptible to noise of the type that could have caused the problem.

"The SIN lines go only from the LCC to all of the LF's in the flight, which could explain the flight peculiar aspect of the problem."

Had a UFO been involved with this incident, the many months of experiment and procedure by USAF personnel, Boeing Corporation and Autonetics scientists and technical representatives would have hardly been necessary. The documents at all levels of the chain of command very plainly establish that the cause of the missile failures was an electronic noise pulse that entered the Logic Coupler within the LCC and shut down all of the LFs from that central location. In July 1967, message traffic from SAMSO, Norton AFB, in California to OOAMA, at Hill AFB, Utah updates recipients on efforts by the Malmstrom AFB Echo Flight investigators to determine the "singular cause." These messages state right up front that it could not yet be determined; it adds, however, that several follow-on actions *had* been identified.

When dealing with the effects of transient, random signals, this is very often the most anyone could reasonably expect, especially in 1967 when the effects of such signals on the microcircuitry in use was not fully understood. One of these follow-on actions requested of OOAMA was the "further investigation of the status of the Wing I power system to determine whether commercial power switching of the ten LF's simultaneously to diesel and subsequently returning simultaneously to commercial power could have caused a load transient creating the anomalous turn-off." Two observations should be immediately evaluated at this point: (1) investigators were certain that they were looking for a *transient signal* that caused a "normal, controlled shutdown" from within the LCC, and (2) *would any of this discussion be taking place at all if a UFO had been involved?* The same messages request further susceptibility tests be conducted on C-53P logic couplers, and that consideration be given to the

incorporation of a force mod cable pulse suppression fix. The only reason a cable pulse suppression fix would *even* be considered would be to correct a problem caused by an internal signal traveling along the interior cable, not an external signal somehow affecting already shielded equipment, such as the UFO theorized but otherwise unsupported by Salas and Hastings.

ICBM histories maintained as TOP SECRET NOFORN documents until 2004 confirm that measures to correct the susceptibility of the Logic Coupler to electromagnetic interference of this type were already scheduled in force modernization orders for the Minuteman II systems across the entire nation. These included the installation of electromagnetic filters at the incoming junctions of the guidance and control systems of Minuteman II. The same filters were expected to work equally well with any electromagnetic pulse travelling along the same lines, so the USAF rewrote the force mod orders to include the Minuteman I systems. *That solved the problem.*

Salas, Hastings and a number of other researchers have repeatedly insisted that the USAF investigation of the Echo Flight Incident was unable to determine either the cause or the exact pathway and origin of the signal that shut down the missiles, suggesting that this great mystery points to an unearthly source. They fail to note, however, that the investigation *did* determine the cause, and upon placing that cause – an electronic noise pulse – within the LCC, the necessity to determine pathway and origin of the signal dropped off *significantly*. A noise pulse is a random electromagnetic event, so the origin is going to vary, and due to this characteristic, it is rarely necessary information to prevent the damage such phenomena may ultimately be responsible for in the future. The pathway of the signal was important, but it was also fairly easy to determine once they established that the noise pulse originated within the LCC. The LCC is a very limited and enclosed environment. In order to affect all ten LFs, no pathway other than the SIN lines was possible, and this is very clearly stated in the documents Salas was sent by the USAF in response to his FOIA request.

The one question that the USAF wanted answered above all others was how to prevent the incident from *recurring*. And that was a fairly easy question to answer once they knew what component of the system was affected, and what degree of susceptibility to noise was characteristic of that component. Determining that degree of susceptibility was the whole point behind the months of experimenting that took place at the contractor facilities. Once those questions were answered,

preventing any recurrence was as simple as extending the scope of force modernization orders intended for Minuteman II that were already in effect. The investigation team determined the cause, the susceptible component, and knew how to prevent it from happening again, and that's all that was required of them. A full investigation to figure out the exact pathway and origin of the signal would have required taking down the LCC, and in 1967, *nobody was going to do that*.

This solution seems prosaic enough, yet it fails to account for most of the rumors regarding UFO interference at Echo Flight. And how are we to explain the alleged events at Oscar Flight and the UFO sightings on March 24-25 without simply dismissing them as having no merit?

In Timothy Good's *Above Top Secret*, his reference to NICAP investigator Raymond Fowler's early research mentions a UFO reported by above ground personnel at Malmstrom AFB "during the week of 20 March 1967." According to Good, Fowler asserts that radar at Malmstrom AFB confirmed the presence of this UFO, and that it was coincident to an event during which all ten missiles failed at a single flight. All command histories and the highly classified ICBM histories agree, however, that the only incident in which so many missiles were taken off of strategic alert at one time was at Echo Flight on March 16, 1967. On page 36 of the command history obtained by Salas, it states very clearly that the "801<sup>st</sup> Radar Squadron, Malmstrom AFB, gave a negative report on any radar or atmospheric interference problems related to Echo Flight." This establishes that the event could *not* have been the Echo Flight Incident. But if the event Fowler refers to that took place "during the week of 20 March 1967" was *not* the Echo Flight incident, what incident was it? Could it have been the November-Oscar Flight incident described by Salas that so many other witnesses insist *never* occurred?

In 1995, one-time Condon Committee UFO investigator, Dr. Roy Craig, published his memoirs of the many months he worked with Condon in a book entitled *UFOs: An Insider's View of the Official Quest for Evidence*. In this book, Craig discusses his own account of the Echo Flight Incident: "In one such instance, the integrity of a major weapon system was brought into doubt by a failure which *rumor attributed to the presence of one or more UFOs in the vicinity* [emphasis added]. It is easy to understand why the information that such a failure had occurred would be closely guarded, for if a potential enemy knew that a major defense system could be made inoperative, the deterrence value of that system would be lost.



"In this instance, the ability to launch a flight of ten Minuteman missiles near Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana had been lost. Recipients of the report that a UFO had been sighted over the area were certain the UFO was responsible for destruction of the control system. Upon receipt of this secret information, I arranged a trip to Malmstrom, ostensibly to talk with the chief of the operations division, Lieutenant Colonel Lewis D. Chase, about his earlier UFO encounter. Discussion of Colonel Chase's experience was one reason for the trip, but the timing was due to the very secret Echo Flight incident." With the entire matter being highly classified, of course, Chase refused to discuss it. What's most interesting, however, is the fact that the date Dr. Craig used when describing the incident to Chase was *not* March 16, 1967, as all records indicate, but March 24-25, 1967. *And his source for that information was NICAP investigator Raymond Fowler.*

This allows us to reach a couple of interesting conclusions contrary to those discussed by both Robert Salas and Robert Hastings in their publications. First, Raymond Fowler very obviously did *not* know the actual date of the Echo Flight Incident. This supports the conclusion other analysts have reached that Fowler did not have the security clearance necessary to examine the Echo Flight materials. If he *did* have such a clearance, it's reasonable to assume that he would have told Craig the correct date; it's also likely that he would not have referred to the incident in his own research as occurring "during the week of 20 March 1967", as described in Timothy Good's *Above Top Secret*. It's far more likely that Fowler had heard *rumors* regarding Echo Flight's missile failures coincident to a UFO sighting, and simply assumed that the date was the same as that of the only UFO sightings recorded in March 1967 in Montana: the March 24-25 sightings over Malmstrom AFB and at Belt, Montana, about 15 miles to the east. This is also supported by Robert Salas, who published an article in October 2009 stating, "Fowler has told me that he only mentioned the rumors of the Echo Flight shutdown of 10 Minuteman missiles to Craig with some trepidation of losing his job and security clearance." He even refers to the Echo Flight Incident as "rumors", an odd choice of words for someone discussing an already acknowledged historical incident. Fowler clearly knew far less than he *thought* he knew. Interestingly enough, Fowler's 1996 communications with Robert Salas also prove completely that Salas was very much aware of the contents of Dr. Craig's book very early in the evolution of his *own* claims. Unfortunately, he seems to have decided against discussing those claims with Craig in any attempt to reconcile their differences, and

absolutely *refused* to discuss Craig's assertions openly, at least not until after Dr. Roy Craig had *died*, at which point Salas very publically eviscerated the man's memory and accused him of numerous "crimes" involving ill-advised investigative conduct, *none* of which can be supported.

Second, if Fowler didn't have the clearance to know the *date* on which the incident happened, which is apparent, Salas' assumption that Fowler's position on the Sylvania Minuteman Board was enough to allow him an insider's view of this UFO event is *false*. This is also supported by the fact that Sylvania is not mentioned anywhere in the Echo Flight documents as having any role in the investigation, contrary to Salas' claims in October 2009. Sylvania's only connection to Malmstrom AFB at all was due to the contract they picked up to complete the ground electrical grid for the 564<sup>th</sup> Squadron, the only Minuteman II system on Malmstrom AFB; it was located on the west side of Malmstrom AFB over two-hundred and twenty miles away from Echo Flight, which was to the east. Raymond Fowler's position on Sylvania's Minuteman Board was close enough to the events that took place that he was made aware of the missiles failing, probably in the context of a *rumor*, exactly as Salas describes it. But without having the clearance for information access, he wasn't privy to any of the details characterizing the event. All he could say was that the incident had *occurred*. He didn't know the date, he didn't know any details, but since he *did* work with Minuteman missiles he picked up on the *rumors* of the incident itself, and the fact that an entire flight of missiles had been taken off of strategic alert. That information alone was classified, and as Salas points out, he was well aware of that little detail, but it didn't stop him from disclosing it to Dr. Roy Craig, who had no clearance, and who should not have been made aware of anything at all regarding the incident, which was still under investigation. Fowler has since admitted to passing classified information to other individuals as well who also lacked the security clearance needed for access, including a newspaper reporter. There is no doubt at all that his discussion of this event with Dr. Craig added *substantially* to the UFO rumors that have been wrapped around the Echo Flight Incident since its occurrence.

We should note as well that the trip Craig made in order to discuss these matters with Colonel Chase was in October 1967, well after Kaminsky's role in the investigation had ended, and well after Salas' determination of "no cause" had allegedly been *reached* by Kaminsky's team. Dr. Craig is very clear that the investigation into Echo Flight was still ongoing even at that late point, proving that Salas'

summary of the investigation's findings and Kaminsky's supposed agreement regarding those findings were overly hasty at best, as none of the conclusions reached during the investigation had yet been determined or published. This scenario is also supported by all of the FOIA documents regarding the Echo Flight Incident thus far published – over 80-pages worth, 90% of which have been ignored by Robert Salas, James Klotz, Robert Hastings, Raymond Fowler, Timothy Good, and, most recently, Leslie Kean, all of whom have discussed this case as a UFO incident, ignoring in the process the testimony of the *only actual witnesses* who have ever come forward: Captain (Retired) Eric D. Carlson, the commander of Echo Flight, and Colonel (Retired) Walter Figel, Jr., the deputy commander of Echo Flight.

For the record, Chase refused to correct Dr. Craig's error regarding the date, because he was not supposed to discuss it at all, not because he was trying to mislead Dr. Craig, as Salas has since inferred. He *did* inform Craig, however, that the incident was *not* related to UFOs at all. This was not a violation of classified materials protocol, because any mention of UFOs in connection with the Echo Flight Incident was UNCLASSIFIED from the very beginning, as the original documents relied upon by Salas and Klotz very clearly establish. In addition, Dr. Craig left Chase completely confident that although the Echo Flight Incident was highly classified, it had *no* relevance to any discussion of UFOs. "Since Colonel Chase was the last man I would doubt when he conveyed this information, I accepted the information as factual, and turned review of Major Schraff's report over to Bob Low, who had received security clearance to read secret information related to the UFO study." Captain James H. Schraff was the actual head of the Echo Flight Incident investigation team, not Bob Kaminsky, as both Salas and Hastings have repeatedly insisted. Robert Low, Craig's colleague on the University of Colorado UFO Study headed by Condon, was also refused access to the investigation team's report, because although he had a SECRET security clearance, like Raymond Fowler, he also lacked the necessary *need-to-know*, like Raymond Fowler. For Low, however, need-to-know was based on "information related to the UFO study." As a result, if the information he requested did *not* concern UFOs, he was *not* granted access to examine it. This was very simply a matter of well-enforced security protocols *alone* – protocols that have been well-defined and in use since World War Two – and had nothing at all to do with the high-level cover-up of a UFO incident that Robert Salas, Robert Hastings, and Raymond Fowler have all insisted was well underway by this time.

An examination of Fowler's original notes – the source, presumably, of Timothy Good's information – suggests even more remarkable revelations. The original source for the information Fowler admitted to both Salas and Good was another Sylvania employee name Ivar Dahlof. Like Fowler, Dahlof would not have had the necessary clearance to examine the Echo Flight materials either. Nobody at Sylvania did. Dahlof nonetheless, according to Fowler, associated a UFO event at Malmstrom AFB, during which time the UFO was radar-visible, and jet fighters at Malmstrom AFB were scrambled in pursuit, with the Echo Flight Incident. He suggested that these two events occurred at the same time during the week of March 20, 1967. More importantly, however, an email that Robert Salas sent to Raymond Fowler in July 1996 states that, upon contacting him, Dahlof was "not very helpful." Salas told Fowler that Dahlof "had no recollection (he said) of the radar visuals or sighting of the UFOs at Malmstrom." So, once again, a presumably reliable witness had turned out to be "not very helpful" in establishing the story that Salas wanted to tell. It should be noted that the March 24-25, 1967 UFO sightings reported *were* radar-visible, although there is no confirmation that fighters were scrambled to intercept them. The absence of an appropriate security clearance for access to more accurate information suggests that Dahlof, followed later by Fowler, had confused the Echo incident of March 16 with the March 24-25 UFO sightings, a conclusion supported by Fowler's disclosure to Dr. Craig that the Echo Flight Incident occurred on March 24-25, 1967. Dahlof, and then Fowler, may have picked up on rumors of a UFO associated with Echo Flight as a result of the maintenance technician's offhanded mention of a UFO to Figel, but since the only UFO sightings reported were on March 24-25, they associated *those* sightings with the E-Flight failures. Any examination, however, of either the statements released by the officers manning Echo Flight on March 16, or the actual documents related to that event insist that a UFO was *not* involved. The UFOs reported on March 24-25, however, seem to fit fairly well the descriptions attributed by Fowler to Ivar Dahlof.

Although this analysis establishes Dahlof's and Fowler's probable responsibility for the excessive rumors about UFOs at Echo Flight, there is still the question of an Oscar Flight incident occurring March 24-25, 1967. After all, the absence of UFOs at Echo Flight does not necessarily indicate that there were

no UFOs at Oscar Flight, since Salas and Hastings now associate that incident with the March 24-25 time frame. Fortunately, there is more than enough evidence to show that this event as well could not have occurred as Salas and Hastings have insisted. Oddly enough, that evidence also involves the burden placed upon USAF investigators by *unfounded UFO rumors*.

Fortunately for the integrity of the investigative process, “operations chief” at Malmstrom AFB was only one of the responsibilities that Colonel Lewis D. Chase had been assigned; he was also the Malmstrom AFB UFO officer. As such, it was his responsibility to investigate all UFO reports made to the command in order to determine whether any further action needed to be taken. As a result of this, when numerous reports of a UFO sighted over Malmstrom AFB started coming in on March 24-25, he found himself automatically on duty, a duty in which he ultimately found himself in Belt, Montana taking statements from the town sheriff a couple of hours after a truck driver and a traffic cop reported a light descending into a nearby ravine. Surprisingly enough, the general characteristics, descriptions, and testimonies that Chase recorded during the course of his investigation are not really that important in relation to the events Salas associated with them some forty years later. Only three points really need to be mentioned: (1) all of the sightings reported were clustered around the administrative area of Malmstrom AFB and regions south and to the east of the base as far as the town of Belt, Montana; there were no reports at all between Belt and the eastern missile sites, which included Echo Flight, November Flight, and Oscar Flight, all of which were about 120 miles from the main base; (2) the sightings reported from Malmstrom AFB *were* confirmed on radar for a fairly extended period of time; and (3) the sheriff of Belt told Chase that the extensive radio reports discussing the UFO sightings had persuaded *hundreds* of listeners all over the state to go outside and actively search for UFOs; there were so many people outside hunting for UFOs that the supposed landing spot, just off of the road leading into Belt, Montana was compromised *completely* before Chase could even examine it. There are newspaper accounts describing how one woman removed a number of branches from the scene that she claimed were “freshly broken, and appeared to have been broken in a whirling fashion” – definitive evidence indeed, but never actually examined because she had *removed* them, broken them off herself and took them away for whatever forensic assessment she may have been capable of. *Not one* of the individuals actively searching the skies reported *anything* between Belt and the three eastern missile flights referred to. Chase filed his

report shortly thereafter and sent it up his chain of command, which, as a result of his position as UFO officer, included Project Blue Book, the facility tasked with investigating UFOs reported to or by the USAF. As a member of NICAP, Raymond Fowler was very well aware of this. In addition, the sightings were the only area reports of UFOs detailed in local newspapers.

Over the course of the next four months, while the investigation of Echo Flight was still underway, a number of rumors regarding the UFO sightings of March 24-25, 1967 made their way to the Foreign Technology Division at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Because it was their responsibility to investigate such matters, they drafted a memorandum requesting further details from the onsite investigator at Malmstrom AFB, Colonel Lewis D. Chase, the command operations chief, *and* the UFO officer: "Our office has been informed that during the sightings there were equipment malfunctions and abnormalities in the equipment. One individual stated that the USAF instructed both military and civilian personnel not to discuss what they had seen as it was a classified government experiment. Request information on the validity of such statements. If some type of experiment did occur on or about 24 March 1967, please advise." In other words, they had picked up on a number of rumors regarding equipment failures coincident to the UFO sightings of March 24-25, suggesting that the report they had previously received may have been incomplete. Naturally, they wanted an explanation.

Colonel Chase responded immediately: "This office has no knowledge of equipment malfunctions and abnormalities in equipment during the period of reported UFO sightings. No validity can be established to the statement that a classified government experiment was in progress or that military and civilian personnel were requested not discuss what they had seen." Very simply put, the original report was complete, there were no equipment failures, and we don't know anything about such an experiment being conducted. *And if there were no equipment failures on March 24-25, 1967, as Chase clearly states, than there was no Oscar Flight incident on March 24-25, 1967, as Salas and Hastings insist.*

Robert Salas has written that Colonel Chase simply *lied* to the Foreign Technology Division, and since Colonel Chase passed away some years ago, he cannot defend himself against such libel; the charge, however, is *absurd*. Before 1961, when the Foreign Technology Division at Wright-Patterson AFB became the "Foreign Technology Division", it was called the *Air Technical Intelligence Center* (ATIC), and was considered one of the most powerful and important intelligence hubs in the U.S.

Department of Defense. It would later become the *National Air and Space Intelligence Center*. When captured MIGs were taken apart and rebuilt so the Air Force could learn as much about them as possible, it was the Foreign Technology Division that was responsible for the job. But that was only one of its responsibilities. The Foreign Technology Division was in charge of a lot of aerospace intelligence missions. As ATIC, it was in charge of Projects Sign and Grudge, the importance of which most UFO historians will immediately recognize. As the Foreign Technology Division, it was in charge of Project Blue Book, the office tasked with investigating UFOs for the USAF. By the spring of 1967, well after the Headquarters Research and Technology Division staff was consolidated with Air Force Systems Command, all of the high technology research and development laboratories were interconnected all the way to the top of the Air Force authority structure with the Foreign Technology Division running *everything* having to do with UFOs. They were also in charge of investigating new technology being used against USAF weapons systems, new technology that *might* be used against USAF weapons systems, and new technology used against the USAF's or other nations' weapons systems that might in turn be adopted or modified for use by U.S. military forces. In its role as the direct superior office to Project Blue Book they represented Colonel Chase's direct authority chain of command due to his position as the UFO officer of Malmstrom AFB, an authority that no one at either Malmstrom AFB or SAC had the authority to circumvent. The Foreign Technology Division represents the very *last* military authority that Chase would have knowingly lied to, and doing so would have been considered a very serious infraction.

Colonel Lewis D. Chase conducted his investigation in accordance with AFR 80-17 (Air Force Regulation), written orders which went into effect in September 1966. Any review of that regulation immediately notes: "FTD [Foreign Technology Division], Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, will prepare a final case report on each sighting reported to it after the data have been properly evaluated. If the final report is deemed significant, FTD will send the report of its findings to AFSC (SFCA), Andrews AFB, Wash D.C. 20331, which will send a report to HQ USAF (AFRDC), Wash D.C. 20330. ... All Air Force activities will cooperate with UFO investigators to insure that pertinent information relative to investigations of UFO are promptly obtained. When feasible, this will include furnishing air or ground transportation and other assistance." These are not *optional* orders. Refusing to obey them is grounds for court martial, and Robert Salas is very well aware of this.

Colonel Chase did *not* lie to FTD, and even raising the issue is an unwarranted attack on a USAF officer whom Dr. Roy Craig described as “the last man I would doubt.” Chase’s well-established honesty puts Salas in a somewhat uncomfortable position, because no equipment failures on March 24-25, means no Oscar Flight incident on March 24-25. And that means that after fifteen years of constantly being forced to backpedal, changing the location of his story twice, changing the date to fit the biased and ill-advised commentaries from Robert Hastings, and *never* being in agreement with the only actual witnesses to the Echo Flight Incident, Robert Salas now has nothing believable to stand up for, and the fictional claims he has been asserting since 1995 have once again been proven *false*.

The UFO rumors that found their way to FTD, forcing that office to query Chase regarding his earlier report, are nonetheless interesting. They assert that “One individual stated that the USAF instructed both military and civilian personnel not to discuss what they had seen”, so the origin of those rumors should be discussed. This analysis, moreover, has already discussed “one individual” who was definitely responsible for similar rumors as a result of his disclosure of classified information to individuals who had no security clearance. This same individual was also one of the very *few* men who happened to possess knowledge of the Echo Flight missile failures, knowledge of the UFO sightings on March 24-25, including the added detail that those sightings were confirmed on radar, and seems to have believed very early in the investigative process that the Echo Flight Incident and the March 24-25 UFO sightings occurred at the same time: *Raymond Fowler*, the NICAP investigator who didn’t even know the date of an event he continued nonetheless to discuss with uncleared personnel. He certainly qualifies, and he obviously didn’t mind theorizing about an event he didn’t know half as much about as he *thought* he knew. And he was certainly trying to get people to take note of the UFO aspect of the Echo Flight case, even though he was unable to provide any evidence whatsoever to support such claims. And there could not have been very many people at all who were aware of the equipment failures represented by the Echo Flight Incident, but believed they had occurred on March 24-25, 1967, in connection with the UFO incident investigated by Colonel Chase. When asked outright whether or not he was responsible for the UFO rumors surrounding this case, Raymond Fowler declined to answer. *But he didn’t deny it either.*

What Fowler *did* do, however, and this is a credit to the man’s integrity as an investigator, is to forward all of his personal notes regarding his UFO investigations at Malmstrom AFB to the author of the



current analysis. These documents contain handwritten notes Fowler wrote indicating that a contact of his in Seattle, named Russ Lawson, an employee of the Boeing Corporation, had told him on April 12 that a "bright round white object circling MAFB missile site in up & down motion" was seen by many USAF personnel. He told Fowler that the USAF had issued a memorandum stating that this UFO was part of a "highly secret govt. testing project" that was not to be publicized, adding that a local operator of a commercial radio station was instructed "not to elaborate on [the] sighting." On another page of these notes, Fowler has written that the sighting occurred in the *afternoon*. With the exception of this last detail, which fits *none* of the incidents that have been discussed, UFO-related or not, the overall description seems to coincide nicely with the rumors that had made their way to FTD shortly thereafter.

In FTD's memo to Chase they report that "One individual stated that the USAF instructed both military and civilian personnel not to discuss what they had seen as it was a classified government experiment."

Raymond Fowler's notes state "USAF issues a memo stating it is a highly secret govt. testing project not to be publicized -- said local opr. at commercial radio station asked by USAF not to elaborate on sighting." Setting aside the complete absence of any actual witnesses supporting Lawson's claims, his statement can probably be dismissed on the grounds that the USAF does not issue memorandums that cannot be documented, the "many USAF personnel" mentioned have never come forward, and cannot be ascertained, and the operator of a local radio station has never been tracked down, although the number of radio stations that can be called "local" cannot possibly be such a large number that such an important witness would simply disappear. As for the UFO itself, the fact that FTD was unaware of it, associating it with the only UFO sighting they had to go on, speaks volumes regarding its supposed authenticity. It has already been established that Raymond Fowler was aware of both the Russ Lawson statements of April 12, 1967 discussing "a classified government experiment" and believed as well that the March 24-25 UFO sightings were associated with the missile failures at Echo Flight. The odds that anybody else on the entire planet meets those requirements must be *insurmountable*, under the circumstances. Most of this information was, after all, highly classified in 1967. It's probably safe to say, therefore, that the rumors that eventually reached FTD originated with Raymond Fowler, NICAP investigator, *extraordinaire*.

As a result of this, it's also a sure bet that Colonel Lewis Chase was *not* conducting a high-level cover-up of a UFO-related incident and was therefore being completely truthful when he told the Foreign Technology Division that there were no equipment failures on March 24-25, 1967. And *that* means there was no Oscar Flight Incident as Robert Salas and Robert Hastings and a fairly large number of other UFO "investigators" and "researchers" have assumed since Salas first discussed the matter in 1995.

One loose end is left to cut away. In Timothy Good's book *Above Top Secret*, he refers to a "nearly identical event" that occurred at Malmstrom AFB the previous year, insisting that while neither of these incidents were confirmed UFO reports, he sees "no reason to doubt" them. It should be possible to account for this as well, if there is any truth to it, particularly if Raymond Fowler is the original source as Good indicates. After all, Fowler has been lamentably *used* by Salas for many years, but he has not knowingly *lied* about any of the cases he has discussed. He has also shown himself completely willing to share as much information as he could possibly provide, even to someone considered by many to be skeptical of UFO claims. It is apparent, however, that he has also been unable to step back a bit from his original analysis in order to see the obvious fallacies to the arguments that have been made by Salas and Hastings. Whether this is due to his unsupported belief that UFOs were involved at Echo Flight, or because he desperately wants to affirm a "classified government experiment" is unknown; what *is* known, however, is that he is basically an honest man. His long-standing investment in the outcome of this particular case is simply too great to enable a more even-handed approach. In any case, as a result of Fowler's basic honesty, it should be possible to substantiate *something* about the "nearly identical" case that Timothy Good, as a result of Fowler's original research, mentions in his book.

The 80-pages of FOIA documents discussing the Echo Flight Incident are very clear in regard to this as well. On pages 39-40 of the same document used by Salas and Klotz in support of their UFO claims, pages that they neglected to publish or otherwise account for in the many years during which they have publically discussed this case, it states: "In reviewing the maintenance history of the Wing, it was discovered a similar incident occurred at Alpha Flight in December 1966. On 19 December 66, A-Flight had some of its LFs shutdown (A-6, A-7, and A-10). The similarity between the two flights was: The same capsule crew, adverse weather conditions, and commercial power failure after the facilities shutdown.

"Since weather condition and capsule crew have been eliminated as causes of the incident, investigation of electrical failure was started." In other words, this *incident* at Alpha Flight was "nearly identical" to the event at Echo Flight, and took place *only three months* before. The investigation team noted the similarity between the two events, because it was useful; it enabled them to reach their conclusion that the cause was a Wing I peculiar problem. The same combination of errors they reported had never been recorded at Wings II through V, so the comparison was an important diagnostic tool by the maintenance technicians involved in the immediate troubleshooting related to the incident. This interpretation of the event is also supported in Raymond Fowler's original 1967 notes, referred to by Timothy Good, which record the contents of a phone call Fowler received from Jim Pompelli. Pompelli was another Sylvania employee who only worked on the Minuteman II system, and therefore lacked the necessary clearance to examine any of the actual documentation. In other words, like Fowler himself, he could only discuss the "rumors" he had picked up. Specifically, Fowler's notes indicate that Pompelli "Phoned to tell me that he heard 'A' Flight had gone down as well during this same period but had no exact date."

On another page, Fowler wrote, "'A' Flt went down / Strike Team out & saw UFO / Paper said AF had on radar / Jim Pompelli". This is the first and only time this particular event has *ever* been associated with UFO interference by *anybody* who worked anywhere near the flight itself, and it was *never* confirmed. These notes were sufficient, however, to be referenced as an actual UFO incident in Timothy Good's *Above Top Secret*.

There was no associated newspaper report for the Alpha Flight missile failures event, as Pompelli stated. There *was*, however, such an article reporting on the events of 24-25 March, 1967, illustrating the sometimes confusing course that a rumor can take in its eventual evolution into an unconfirmed UFO incident that a well-respected UFO investigator might find "no reason to doubt."

And so, with a simple *snip* of all loose ends, we see that not only were *no* UFOs involved at Echo Flight or any other flight of missiles taken off of strategic alert at Malmstrom AFB in March 1967, it is highly probable that questions of UFO intervention would not have been raised by *anybody*, had it not been for the investigation conducted by Raymond Fowler, a NICAP investigator who didn't know anywhere near as much about UFOs at Malmstrom AFB as he thought he did. In closing, it should be

stressed as well, that -- in contrast to Timothy Good's opinion that although the UFO aspects of these events were unconfirmed, he sees "no reason to doubt" them – *any* claims of UFO interference with *any* of the four missile flights discussed in this analysis is *completely* unsupportable – *and we see no reason to believe them.*

**The following pages contain illustrations and copies of referenced documents**

8 APR 1967

BO

Investigation of UFO Reported Landing on 24 March 1967

Dr. Condon  
University of Colorado  
Boulder, Colorado 80302

1. At approximately 2100 hours on the night of 24 March 1967, a truck driver by the name of [redacted] from Laurel, Montana was proceeding Northwest on U. S. Highways 87-89 to Great Falls. When approximately 2 miles Southeast of the turn-off to Belt, Montana, he claimed he saw a "huge dome shaped object, emitting an intense bright light" land in a ravine approximately 1 1/2 miles south of the highway. Mr. [redacted] parked his truck and approached the object. As he approached, the object lifted off the ground only to settle back in a ravine hidden from the highway by a ridge. Mr. [redacted] flagged down a passing motorist (Mr. [redacted] Great Falls) and requested that the Sheriff's office be notified. This was done by Mr. [redacted] and a highway patrolman was dispatched to the scene (Mr. Bud Nader). Mr. Nader reported that upon reaching the scene he observed an unusual light emanating from the area that the truck driver, Mr. [redacted] claimed the object had landed the second time. The ravine where the object was claimed to be located was extremely steep and rocky and not accessible to the highway patrol. Further numbers of officers were dispatched from the Sheriff's Office of Cascade County.

2. Numerous reports were being received by the dispatcher at Base Operations, plus questions from the public. At 2205, Lt Col Lewis D. Chase, Base UFO Investigating Officer, was notified by the Command Post of the reported landing. Sequence of events following the notification were as follows:

- 2215 - Check was made with Base Operations as to aircraft movement in the area. An outbound transient aircraft departed Great Falls enroute to Glasgow, Montana. Departure time was 2109. All other aircraft were accounted for.
- 2230 - Discussion with the Sheriff of Cascade County revealed that he had dispatched additional deputies to the area. Requested

This is the first page of a report forwarded to Condon's University of Colorado UFO Project discussing the March 24-25, 1967 UFO sightings at Malmstrom AFB; this is the incident that Raymond Fowler thought was coincidental to the Echo Flight missile failures; it was another incident entirely, but his confusion provided Salas the means to claim that Echo Flight was caused by a UFO; it wasn't, and there were no other missile failures on March 16, as Salas once claimed, nor on March 24-25 as Salas and others have attempted to document since about 2005.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS 341ST COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (SAC)  
MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, MONTANA, 59402



REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: BO

3 July 1967

SUBJECT: UFO Observations, Malmstrom AFB Area

TO: Colonel James C. Manatt (TDET/UFO)  
Hq Foreign Technology Division (AFSC)  
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio 45433

1. Reference TDET/UFO letter dated 30 June 1967 on above subject.
2. This office has no knowledge of equipment malfunctions and abnormalities in equipment during the period of reported UFO sightings. No validity can be established to the statement that a classified government experiment was in progress or that military and civilian personnel were requested not to discuss what they had seen.
3. A written report on the events that transpired during the alleged UFO reported landing on 24 March 1967, fully documents all findings by the investigating officer. A copy of this report was forwarded to your office on 3 April 1967.
4. If we can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to write.

FOR THE COMMANDER

*Lewis D. Chase*

LEWIS D. CHASE, Lt Colonel, USAF  
Chief, Operations Division

Peace . . . is our Profession

This is the letter Colonel Chase sent to the commander of the Foreign Technology Division denying knowledge of equipment failures coincident to March 24-25, 1967 UFO reports; this proves that there were no missile failures at all on March 24-25, 1967, as Salas and others insist. Note that the date of Chase's original investigation report was forwarded to FTD on April 3, well before the date that Fowler was first told about a secret government experiment by Russ Lawson.

VZCZCHL278  
FITS JAW RUCSAAAG196 0702015-SSSS--RUMWBOA.

ZNY ~~SECRET~~  
P 17225Z MAR 67

FM SAC  
TO RUMWBOA/OOANA HILL AFB UTAH  
INFO RUMBKNA/15AF  
RUMWBOA/341SNW MALMSTROM AFB MONT  
RUMWBA/AFFRO BOEING CO SEATTLE WASH  
RUMJABA/8SD WORTON AFB CALIF

1572342  
17/C-208  
DCM-1  
WC-1  
JCO-1  
~~SECRET~~

BT  
S E C R E T DTN 22752 MAR 67.  
ACTION: OOANA (OONCI/OONE-COL DAVENPORT), INFO: 15AF  
(DN4C), 341SNW (DCM), BOEING AFFRO (D.J. DOWNEY, MINUTEMAN  
ENGINEERING) 8SD (BSS, SCOR)

SUBJECT: LOSS OF STRATEGIC ALERT, ECHO FLIGHT, MALSTROM  
AFB. (U)  
REF: MY SECRET MESSAGE DTN 02751, 17 MAR 67, SAME SUBJECT.  
ALL TEN MISSILES IN ECHO FLIGHT AT MALMSTROM LOST STRAT ALERT WITHIN  
TEN SECONDS OF EACH OTHER. THIS INCIDENT OCCURRED AT 0845L ON  
16 MARCH 67. AS OF THIS DATE, ASS MISSILES HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO STRAT

PAGE 2 RUCSAAAG196 ~~SECRET~~  
ALERT WITH NO APPARENT DIFFICULTY. INVESTIGATION AS TO THE CAUSE OF THE  
INCIDENT IS BEING CONDUCTED BY MALMSTROM TEST. TWO FITTS HAVE  
BEEN RUN THROUGH TWO MISSILES THIS FAR. NO CONCLUSIONS HAVE BEEN  
DRAWN. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT BOTH COMPUTERS IN BOTH G&C'S  
WERE UPSET MOMENTARILY. CAUSE OF THE UPSET IS NOT KNOWN AT THIS  
TIME. ALL OTHER SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION AT THIS TIME IS CONTAINED IN  
ABOVE REFERENCED MESSAGE.

FOR OOANA. THE FACT THAT NO APPARENT REASON FOR THE LOSS OF TEN  
MISSILES CAN BE READILY IDENTIFIED IS CAUSE FOR GRAVE CONCERN TO THIS  
HEADQUARTERS. WE MUST HAVE AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE CAUSE  
AND CORRECTIVE ACTION AND WE MUST KNOW AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WHAT  
THE IMPACT IS TO THE FLEET, IF ANY. REQUEST YOUR RESPONSE BE IN KEEP-  
ING WITH THE URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM. WE IN TURN WILL PROVIDE OUR  
FULL COOPERATION AND SUPPORT.  
FOR OOANA AND 15AF WE HAVE CONCURRED IN A BOEING REQUEST TO SEND  
TWO ENGINEERS, MR. R.E. RIGERT AND MR. W. M. DUTTON TO MALMSTROM  
TO COLLECT FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROBLEM FOR POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE  
IN LATER ANALYSIS. REQUEST COOPERATION OF ALL CONCERNED TO PROVIDE  
THEM ACCESS TO AVAILABLE INFORMATION, I.E., CREW COMMANDERS LOG  
ENTRIES, MAINTENANCE FORMS, INTERROGATION OF KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE, ETC.

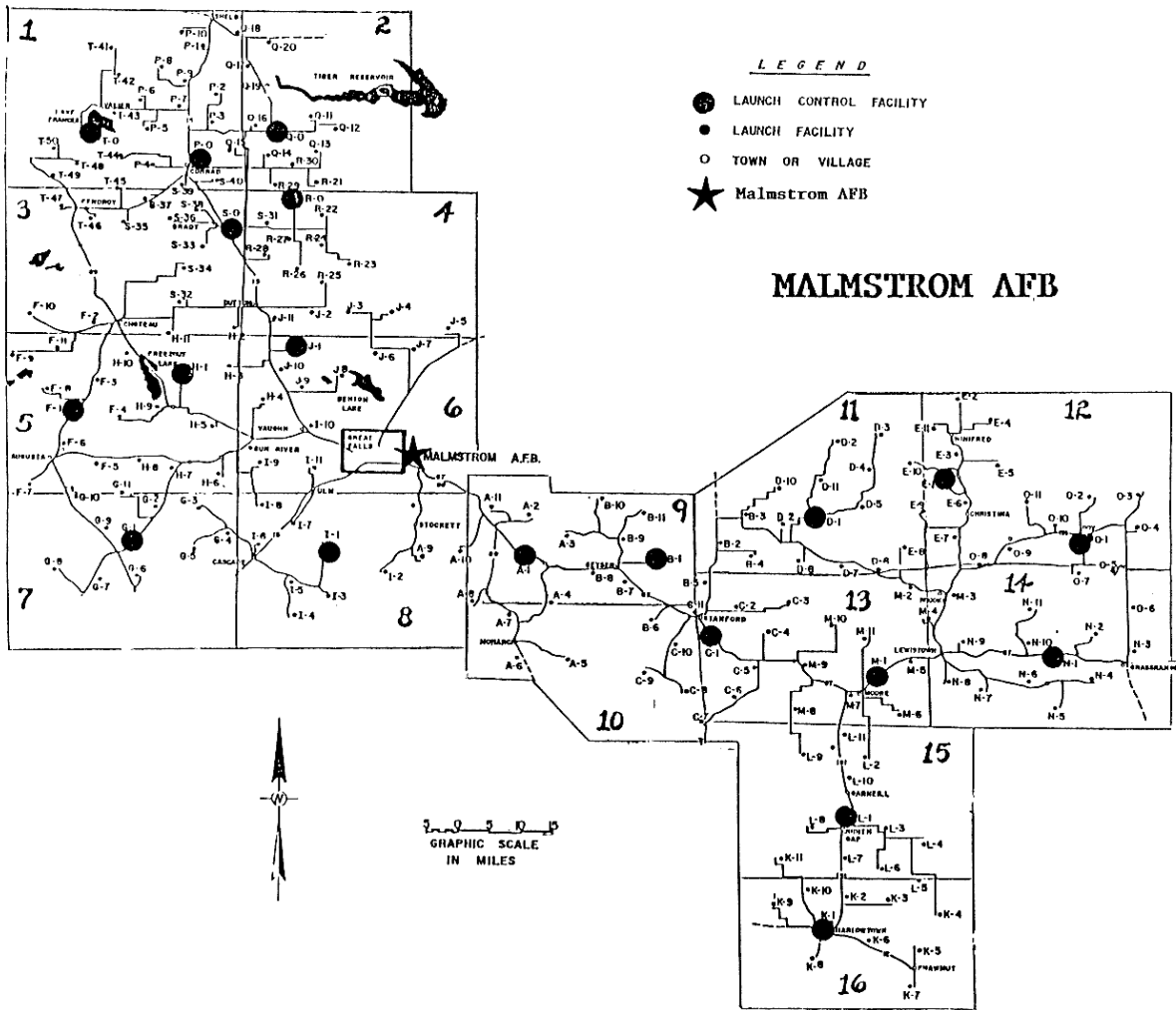
PAGE 3 RUCSAAAG196 ~~SECRET~~  
SECURITY CLEARANCES AND DATE AND TIME OF ARRIVAL WILL BE SENT FROM  
THE AFFRO BY SEPARATE MESSAGE.  
FOR 15AF. OOANA HAS INDICATED BY TELECON THAT THEY ARE SENDING  
ADDITIONAL ENGINEERING SUPPORT. REQUEST YOUR COOPERATION TO INSURE  
MAXIMUM RESULTS ARE OBTAINED FROM THIS EFFORT. GP74. BCASMC-67-437

BT

~~SECRET~~

~~GROUP 1~~  
~~EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING AND DECLASSIFICATION~~  
~~EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE~~

This is the SECRET message sent out by Malmstrom AFB notifying necessary commands about the Echo Flight Incident on March 16, 1967; there is no mention of a UFO, and the message was not addressed to Foreign Technology Division as required for all UFO incidents in 1967.



This map of Malmstrom AFB shows all of the missile sites discussed; Echo Flight is between quadrants 11 and 12 (mostly in 12), November Flight is in quadrant 14, and Oscar Flight is between quadrants 12 and 14 (mostly in 12); the main administrative area of Malmstrom AFB is in quadrant 6; the blackened circles represent the launch control facilities (LCF), also called the launch control centers (LCC); the 564<sup>th</sup> Squadron LCCs are located to the extreme northwest of the main administrative area of Malmstrom AFB.



10/1/96

Hello Bob,

Sorry about the delay in responding to your correspondence. Since talking to you, we have been on trips to Montana and Utah and attempting to coordinate repair efforts on a condo which we own in Glendale, AZ - on Aug 14, a storm with winds up to 125MPH with hail and 3" of rain within one hour did about \$7,000 in damages.

The info you provided is very interesting but I have slightly different memories - which could easily be incorrect as they say, "The memory is the second thing to go."

My records indicate that we were formed as a crew in Sep 66 in "N" status. I don't have the date of upgrade to "R". Our home site was Oscar. I left crew duty for the Command Post in early Nov 67.

Related to the incident itself, I recall us being at the Oscar LCF. Topside security notified us the mobile team had reported observing the "UFO" while responding (obviously at your direction) to a situation at an outlying LF - this particular one being located just east of Highway 19, the state highway which runs north from Grass Range to the Missouri River. With little or no direction from higher authority (Command Post or Alternate Command Post), the Security team was directed to return to the LCF, maintaining radio contact at all times, as the security system reset. While enroute back to the LCF, radio contact was lost and remained out until the security vehicle approached the LCF. Two very upset young men wasted no time getting back inside.

I do not recall personnel injury of any type but the two individuals were sent back to the support base early. I heard second-hand that one was released from security team duties.

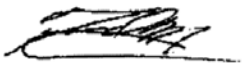
I do not recall any follow-up activities by any Wing personnel. The Command Post checklist, as I recall, just said to report any such incidents to civilian offices.

This probably does not assist your efforts in any way, but I applaud your continued interest in a fascinating area of interest. Do these alien UFOs exist? I do not know, but there are certainly enough reported situations that I must be inclined to suspect that they do. There are numerous folks who get together each year at a small town north of Las Vegas that maintain that "aliens from other planet(s) have visited this area." Some maintain that the Air Force has captured at least one.

In Montana, while we there, an individual associated with the Great Falls Electrics baseball team, a Mr. Nick Mariana (SP?) was very outspoken about his observations, complete with photographs. Have you correlated your investigations with his?

I wish you success in this challenge. Please keep me posted. If you ever get to Vegas, I hope we can get together.

Best Regards,



**This is a copy of the letter written by Colonel (Retired) Frederick Meiwald that has been used by Robert Salas and Robert Hastings as a confirmation of the missile shutdowns incident Salas has described for Oscar Flight, on March 24-25, 1967. Note that there is no mention at all of any missile failures having occurred coincident to the UFO discussed. There are, in fact, no confirmations at all regarding the Oscar Flight event proposed by Salas and Hastings.**

MAFB

WEEK OF MARCH 20, 1967 (IVOR DAHLF)

MAFB  
 RADAR-VISUAL  
 STRIKE TEAMS OUT  
 ATTEMPTED INTERCEPT  
 \* W133A TYPE FLT DOWN <sup>"E" FLT</sup> DURING SIGHTINGS  
 \*\* (EQUIP. ABNORMALITIES COULD NOT BE EXPLAINED)

APRIL 1-4 (SID WARTEL)  
 SIGHTINGS CONTINUING  
 \* HEARD OF ABOVE FLT DOWN  
 " RADAR VISUALS  
 MONITORED RADIO CHATTER BETWEEN SITES  
 RE: SIGHTINGS

\* - JIM POMPELLI & SID WARTEL  
 \*\* - IVOR DAHLF.

---

APRIL 10, 11 (LAST FEW DAYS - REC. INPUT 4/12/7)  
 ROSS LAWSON (BOEING)  
 BRIGHT ROUND WHITE OBJECT CIRCLING MAFB MISSILE  
 SITE IN UP & DOWN MOTION - MANY SAW IT - USAF

ISSUES  
 A MEMO  
 STATING **NFO TO**

IT IS A HIGHLY SECRET GOVT. TESTING PROJECT  
 NOT TO BE PUBLICIZED - SAID LOCAL OP. AT COMMERCIAL  
 RADIO STATION ASSISTED BY  
**NICAP - HYNEX**  
 USAF NOT TO ELABORATE ON SIGHTING.

- **McDONALD.**

This is the original page of Raymond Fowler's notes discussing the information passed to him regarding a UFO and associated USAF activities by Russ Lawson, a Boeing Corporation employee in Seattle, Washington. This represents part of the UFO rumors that so concerned FTD that they requested additional information from Colonel Chase, the UFO officer at Malmstrom AFB.

SEATTLE'S CONTACT FOR BOEING  
RUSS LAWSON  
 LAST 2 DAYS  
 AFTERNOON - HIGH WHITE  
 ROUND LIGHT - MOVED UP & DOWN  
 IN CIRCLES - USAF ISSUED MEMO  
 STATING IT WAS A HIGHLY SECRET  
 GOVT TESTING PROJECT - NOT TO BE  
 PUBLICIZED - TALKED TO OPR OF  
 A COMMERCIAL STATION - USAF SAID  
 NOT TO ELABORATE  
 ON IT

5/19  
 5/18  
 5/15

VENDOR RECEIPT  
 ACTING W/ SITE

RELEASE  
 DATE P.O. #  
 P.O. #

PART DESCRIPTION  
 COMMITMENT  
 VENDOR STATUS  
 VENDOR #

This is the second page of Fowler's notes discussing Russ Lawson's report of the white UFO moving up and down and in circles around a missile site sunk into the earth of the Montana plains as a result of the secret government testing project that didn't exist.

"A" FLT WENT DOWN  
STRIKE TEAM OUT & SAW UFO  
PAPER SAID AF HAD ON RADAR  
JIM POMPELLI

---

FOR SUPPLY

FOR SUPPLY

This is the handwritten note Fowler took upon being told by Jim Pompelli that a “nearly identical” incident had supposedly occurred the previous year at Alpha Flight. The *rumors* Pompelli told Fowler about were the result of the numerous similarities noted by the Echo Flight Incident investigation team, not any actual interference by UFOs. Pompelli’s mention of this incident to Raymond Fowler is the first and only time this particularly incident has ever been associated with UFOs. It was sufficient, however, for Timothy Good to include it as an actual UFO incident in his book *Above Top Secret*.