

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

5D-OSI/DML/fmn

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL USAF  
5TH DISTRICT OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS  
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE DAYTON OHIO

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IN REPLY REFER TO: 5D 24-21

26 October 1949

SUBJECT: PROJECT GRUDGE (Incident near Camp Oak Flat, California)  
SPECIAL INQUIRY

TO: Commanding General  
Air Materiel Command  
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base  
Dayton, Ohio  
ATTN: MCIAXS

1. The inclosed report of investigation by Special Agent BERL E. PENNINGTON, DO #19, Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California, dated 17 October 1949, is forwarded as a matter pertaining to your Command.

2. This investigation was not requested by or through this office.

*James F. X. O'Connell*  
JAMES F. X. O'CONNELL  
Lt Colonel, USAF  
District Commander

1 Incl  
R/I dtd 17 Oct 49

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Bellevue, Colorado

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT OF INVESTIGATION	FILE NO. 24-30	DATE
	REPORT MADE BY BERL E. PENNINGTON	
TITLE UNCONVENTIONAL TYPE AIRCRAFT (Sighted 5 September 1949 near Camp Oak Flat, California)	REPORT MADE AT DO #19, Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California	
	PERIOD 6,7,13,14,16,21,22,28 Sep, 5-8 Oct 1949	
	OFFICE OF ORIGIN DO #19, Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California	
	STATUS CLOSED	

CHARACTER  
**SPECIAL INQUIRY**

REFERENCE  
None, this is an initial report

SYNOPSIS

SECRET  
Auth: C/S USAF  
KWK, Lt Col., USAF

Investigation requested by CAPT GORDON T. COLLEY, Base Security Officer, Mather Air Force Base, California. SGT [redacted] and SGT [redacted] stated that while flying in a private aircraft in the vicinity of Lobec, California, they had observed an unconventional type aircraft. Aircraft was described as oval in shape and constructed of a dull, grey metallic substance, approximately thirty-five (35) feet in diameter. Object rapidly gained altitude to approximately seven thousand (7,000) feet, turned in a sharp left bank, and headed in a southerly direction, climbing gradually, and straight out in the direction of the ocean, approximately over Santa Paula and Venturas. No sign of exhaust or vapor trail, and no sounds were noticeable. Object in sight approximately two (2) minutes before disappearing in the distance. Investigation revealed no other witnesses. Aerial photographs taken of area disclosed unidentifiable objects on the ground. A trip was made to Lobec, Calif., to investigate unidentifiable objects, as illustrated in aerial photographs, at which time these objects were determined not to be connected with unconventional aircraft. Interview with SUBJECTS indicated them to be truthful and dependable and not addicted to narcotics or alcohol. Last physical examinations completed on SUBJECTS indicated no abnormalities; no other physical examinations available. Record and Agency checks revealed no derogatory information concerning SUBJECTS.

CLOSED

DISTRIBUTION DO #5 (Action Copy) 2 Hq, OSI 2 CG, Mather AFB 2 File 2	ACTION COPY FORWARDED TO Commanding General Air Material Command Wright-Patterson AF Base Dayton, Ohio ATTN: MCIAXO-3	FILE STAMP
	APPROVED  Kenneth W. King Lt Colonel, USAF Acting DISTRICT COMMANDER	

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 14  
DOD DIR 5200.10

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DETAILS:

1. This investigation was requested by CAPT GORDON T. COLLEY, 10552A, Base Security Officer, Mather Air Force Base, California, and was predicated upon a report to the effect that SGT [REDACTED], 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California, and SGT [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California, had observed an unconventional type aircraft in flight in the vicinity of Lebec, California, on 5 September 1949. Lebec, California, is approximately seventeen (17) miles north of Camp Oak Flat on U.S. Highway 99. Sandberg Weather Station, thirteen (13) miles to the southeast of Lebec, forms a rough equalateral triangle with Lebec and the small hamlet known as Camp Oak Flat, which is ten (10) miles southwest of Sandberg.

2. Special Agents LEE B. NOLTON and LAWRENCE W. BROUSSARD assisted the writer in this investigation.

AT MATHER AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

3. On 6 September 1949, SGTS [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] reported to the Office of Special Investigations, Mather Air Force Base, California, that they had observed an unconventional type aircraft in flight in the vicinity of Lebec, California, while flying in a Piper Cub aircraft operated by SGT [REDACTED].

4. SGT [REDACTED] executed the following statement on 6 September 1949. Original signed, witnessed statement and carbon copies on file at 19th District Office of Special Investigations, Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California:

Mather Air Force Base  
Mather Field, California  
6 September 1949

I, SGT [REDACTED] assigned to the 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California, voluntarily make the following statement to BERL E. PENNINGTON, who has identified himself to me as a Special Agent, OSI, USAF.

On 5 September 1949, at approximately 1200 hours, while flying at approximately 7,000 feet enroute from Los Angeles to Sacramento, California, I sighted an object over Camp Oak Flat which was several thousand feet below us coming up with a terrific ascent headed approximately due south as if to go over Los Angeles. We were just rounding an 8,000 foot mountain and took him by surprise. He was coming up at about an 85° angle and coming up from some small foothills to the right of the large mountain. When he reached our altitude he seemed to hover for a time and changed course as if going out to sea over Santa Paula. I followed him with my eyes until he was out of sight. I could not detect any sign of power or controls as the shadows underneath prevented it. It looked metal with a canopy on top with approximately 35 feet of span. There was no way to determine speed but the rate of climb was terrific.

I have read this statement consisting of one (1) page and have initialed each page thereof and all corrections thereon. This statement is given freely

[REDACTED]

OSI Case #24-30  
DETAILS (Cont'd):

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and is the truth to the best of my knowledge or belief.

S/

Sgt.,  
3535th Bomb Trng. Wing  
Mather Air Force Base  
Mather Field, California

WITNESSED: S/ Gordon T. Colley,  
GORDON T. COLLEY, Capt., USAF  
S/ Berl E. Pennington,  
BERL E. PENNINGTON, S/A OSI

5. SGT PALMER executed the following statement on 6 September 1949. Original signed, witnessed statement and carbon copies on file at 19th District Office of Special Investigations, Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California:

Mather Air Force Base  
Mather Field, California  
6 September 1949

I, SGT PALMER, assigned to the 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California, voluntarily make the following statement to BERL E. PENNINGTON, who has identified himself to me as a Special Agent, OSI, USAF.

On 5 September 1949, Sgt PALMER and I left San Fernando at approximately 1200 hours, headed in a northerly direction straight over Grapevine Pass. Just before we reached the highest point of the pass, with an 8,000 foot mountain to our left and on the right other lower mountains, we sighted an object ascending from the foothills at about an 80 or 85° angle. It was about 3,000 feet below us when we spotted it and came right up approximately even with us, about 1,000 feet off our right wing tip. Our elevation at this time was approximately 6,500 feet above sea level. It seemed to rise from the floor of the hills but we didn't actually see it leave the ground. When it reached our altitude, it seemed to hover for a moment and then it shot off almost directly south. It was traveling at a terrific speed, slightly ascending at about a 5° angle. It headed south over the ocean disappearing from our view. This object appeared to be like a sphere, slightly oval in shape, appearing a little longer than wide. This object did not appear to have any support of any kind, no exhaust or control surfaces whatsoever, and was of a dull metallic substance, similar to aluminum. It appeared to be about 30 or 35 feet in diameter.

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OSI Case #24-30  
DETAILS (Cont'd):

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I have read this statement consisting of one (1) page and have initialed each page thereof and all corrections thereon. This statement is given freely and is the truth to the best of my knowledge or belief.

S/ ~~██████████~~

Sgt., ~~██████████~~  
3535th Bomb Trng. Wing  
Mather Air Force Base  
Mather Field, California

WITNESSED: S/ Gordon T. Colley  
GORDON T. COLLEY, Capt., USAF  
S/ Berl E. Pennington  
BERL E. PENNINGTON, S/A OSI

6. Review of ~~██████████~~ Service Record and 201 File maintained at 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California, revealed that ~~██████████~~ enlisted in the Air Force on 30 June 1948 and has an efficiency rating of excellent and is considered a conscientious hard worker, and was recently promoted for his work. ~~██████████~~ completed one (1) year of high school and has an AGCT score of 115. Last physical examination was given on 30 June 1948, at that time no physical abnormalities were noted. Vision test revealed vision to be 20/20. No evidence of the use of narcotics or alcoholic beverages were noted.

7. 1ST SGT ~~██████████~~, 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California; M/SGT ~~██████████~~, 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Hangar Chief; and MR ~~██████████~~, Civilian Foreman, Propeller Shop, stated that ~~██████████~~ is dependable and trustworthy, and an exceptionally good worker, and to their knowledge, does not drink or use narcotics.

8. Review of ~~██████████~~ Service Record and Military 201 File maintained at 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California, revealed that ~~██████████~~ enlisted in the Air Force on 10 November 1947 and has an efficiency rating of excellent and is considered an excellent worker. ~~██████████~~ completed three-fourths (3/4) year of high school and has an AGCT score of 108. Last physical examination was given on 10 November 1947. At that time, no physical abnormalities were noted. Vision test revealed vision to be 20/20. No evidence of the use of narcotics or alcoholic beverages was noted.

9. 1ST ~~██████████~~, 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather Air Force Base, California; M/SGT ~~██████████~~, 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Hangar Chief; and MR ~~██████████~~, Civilian Foreman, Electrical Shop, stated that ~~██████████~~ was a steady good worker and exercised good judgement, and to their knowledge, does not drink or use narcotics.

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OSI CASE #24-30  
DETAILS (Cont'd):

~~TOP SECRET - SECURITY~~

AT SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

10. Review of the files at the Office of the Sheriff and the Police Department at Sacramento, California, failed to reveal any record or information pertaining to either ~~██████████~~ or ~~██████████~~.

AT LEBEC, CALIFORNIA

11. On 7 September 1949, Special Agent ~~██████████~~ and ~~██████████~~ flew to Lebec, California, to take aerial photographs of the area to determine if there were any indications on the ground of unusual activities in the area. Photographs were taken to CAPT ROBERT J. SCOTT, JR., 12905A, Hq & Hq Squadron, 3535th Bomb Trng. Group, Mather Air Force Base, California, for photo interpretation. Photograph number 9R-25-1-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-7500-3450N 11847W-CORRAL, indicated a well traveled road in the back country and unidentified dark spots on the ground. Photograph number 9R-25-2-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-7500-3450N 11847W-BLDGS, revealed well traveled road in back country and indication of unusual activity around constructions. Photograph number 9R-25-5-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-5500-3450N 11847W-CONSTRUCTION, revealed an unfinished structure with piles of lumber and construction materials and metal drum containers in the vicinity. Photograph number 9R-25-6-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-5500N 11847W-BLDG-SILVERTOP revealed the presence of a newly constructed Nissen type building with metal top partially concealed in the wooded area. Photographs included as Exhibits A, B, C & D respectively.

12. On 13 September 1949, Special Agents BERL E. PENNINGTON and LAWRENCE W. BROUSSARD, accompanied by CAPT COLLEY, proceeded by automobile to Lebec, California, to investigate questionable area as indicated by aerial photographs. Area as illustrated by photograph number 9R-25-1-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-7500-3450N 11847W-CORRAL, revealed no unusual markings or indentations in the ground. Area as illustrated by photograph number 9R-25-2-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-7500-3450N 11847W-BLDGS, revealed the presence of a cattle corral and shed used to house feed for cattle. Area as illustrated by photo number 9R-25-5-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-5500-3450N 11847W-CONSTRUCTION, revealed a permanent type structure with the second story incomplete, with metal drum containers and building material in the immediate area that is to be a Bell Telephone Company, Micro-Way Relay Station upon completion. Area as illustrated in photograph number 9R-25-6-VV-3535BTW-7 Sep 49-G 3/8"-5500N 11847W-BLDG-SILVERTOP, revealed a newly completed Nissen type structure that is being used as a hunting lodge by the owners of the Tejon Ranch, Lebec, California.

13. Discreet investigation in the area of Lebec, California, revealed no one who had observed the presence of unusual aircraft in the vicinity of Lebec.

~~TOP SECRET - SECURITY~~

OSI Case #24-30  
DETAILS (Cont'd):

AT MATHER AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

14. On 6 October 1949 at 1115 hours, Special Agent LEE B. NOLTON contacted CAPT CLARENCE P. TALBOT, JR., AO-581273, Station Weather Officer, Mather Air Force Base, California, relative to weather conditions in the vicinity of Lebec, California. After reviewing weather reports, CAPT TALBOT stated that Sandberg Weather Station, California, reported the sky condition clear with visibility of fifty (50) miles, wind from Southeast at 15 knots, temperature 81°, dew point 22°, in the weather report of 5 September 1949, at 1230 hours. Sandberg Weather Station is located approximately thirteen (13) miles Southeast, in line of sight, from Lebec, California. The weather reports further revealed that a pilot balloon, for winds aloft purposes, was released at Sandberg on 5 September shortly prior to 1300 hours. Pilot balloons are approximately twenty-six (26) inches in diameter, with an ascension rate of two hundred (200) to two hundred and sixty (260) yards per minute, and the type generally used on a clear day, such as reported on 5 September at Sandberg, is white in color. CAPT TALBOT stated that, according to the Sandberg Winds Aloft Report at this time, the balloon would have drifted northwest, towards Lebec, during the first two thousand (2,000) foot ascension, and then veered Northeast towards Mojave, California.

15. Review of the records at Base Operations, Mather Air Force Base, California, revealed that no aircraft had either arrived or departed that station which could have been in the vicinity of Lebec, California, at the time of the sighting of the unconventional aircraft by [redacted] and [redacted].

AT MCCLELLAN AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA

16. On 5 October 1949, perusal by Special Agent LEE B. NOLTON of the Report of Aircraft Departures, maintained by the Base Operations Office, McClellan Air Force Base, California, revealed that an L-13 type aircraft, #47-300, piloted by CAPT G. M. LIVERS, 2600 A.B.U., Pope Air Force Base, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, departed McClellan Air Force Base on 5 September 1949 at 0932, estimated true air speed one hundred and ten (110) miles per hour, with arrival at March Air Force Base, California, at 1354; L-13 type aircraft, #47-302, piloted by 1ST LT W. K. ALLEN, 2600 A.B.U., Pope Air Force Base, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, departed McClellan Air Force Base at 1004, estimated true air speed one hundred and ten (110) miles per hour, and arrived at Ontario Airport, Ontario, California, at 1402. As it is two hundred and seventy (270) air miles from McClellan Air Force Base to Lebec, California, with a climb to six thousand (6,000) feet required, eighty-five (85) air miles from Lebec to Ontario, California, and one hundred and five (105) air miles from Lebec to March Air Force Base, it is estimated that CAPT LIVERS was over Lebec at approximately 1230 and LT ALLEN was in the same vicinity at approximately 1300 hours.

- CLOSED -



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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION

1. 1. Date of sighting - 5 September 1949.
2. 2. Time of sighting - Approximately 1200 PST.
3. 3. Sighted from air.
  - a. SUBJECT was in the air about 7,000 feet above sea level, flying approximately northeast coming around a mountain which was about 8,000 feet when unconventional aircraft was sighted. Unconventional aircraft was headed approximately due south as if going right through Los Angeles. Object was approximately 3,000 feet below SUBJECT when sighted. This occurred east of Camp Oak Flat.
4. 4. One (1) object.
5. 5. Not applicable as it was approximately 1200 hours and object was below observer.
6. 6. Distance of object from observer
  - a. Approximately 3,000 feet below.
  - b. Altitude 3,000 feet rising to approximately 7,000 feet.
7. 7. In sight about forty-five (45) seconds.
8. 8. Appearance of object
  - a. Metal painted silver or just plain metal.
  - b. Oval shape, like a teardrop from side view.
  - c. Metal painted silver or just plain metal.
  - d. Approximately 35 feet in diameter.
9. 9. Direction of flight - South veering to Southwest.
10. 10. Object came up at an 85° angle, seemed to stop as if he saw SUBJECT, then broke off his climb, and then shot off in direct line of flight.
11. 11. Evidence of exhaust - none visible
12. 12. Effect on clouds - cloudless sky
13. 13. Lights - none visible

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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION (Cont'd)

14. Support - none visible
15. Propulsion - none visible
16. Control and stability - none visible
17. Air ducts - none visible
18. Speed - No way of determining miles per hour rate of speed, although rate of climb was terrific and by the time SUBJECT could bank his plane the aircraft had almost vanished from sight.
19. Sound - none heard
20. Manner of disappearance.
  - a. Maintained straight level flight until it disappeared from view in the distance.

RELATIVE TO THE OBSERVER

1. SGT ~~REDACTED~~
2. 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather AFB, California.
3. Airman, United States Air Force
4. Mather Air Force Base, California
5. Hobbies - Flying
6. Ability to determine
  - a. Color - no abnormalities in perception of color.
  - b. Speed - Average estimation of speed.
  - c. Size - Estimation of size at distance based on comparison of known aircraft.
7. Reliability of observer
  - a. Agency checks; neighbor and fellow employee checks; reveal no derogatory information. Observer is considered truthful and reliable.

**PROJECT 10073 RECORD**

<b>1. DATE - TIME GROUP</b> 5 Sep 49 5/2000Z	<b>2. LOCATION</b> Lebec, California
<b>3. SOURCE</b> <del>XXXXXXXX</del> Military	<b>10. CONCLUSION</b> 1. BALLOON 2. Misinterpretation of conventional objects.
<b>4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS</b> One	
<b>5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION</b> 2 Minutes	<b>11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS</b> Observers sighted object which rapidly gained altitude and turned in a sharp left bank, then headed due south. No sign of exhaust or trails. No sound. Photos were taken of the ground in that area which disclosed unidentified objects on the ground.  Sandberg WX station launched a balloon at 1230. The balloon would have been in the Lebec area during the time of the sighting. The <del>photos</del> alleged unidentified objects on the ground which showed up on photos were found to be a corral and shed used to feed and shelter cattle, a building with an incomplete second story, and a hunting lodge.
<b>6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION</b> Air visual	
<b>7. COURSE</b> South and rising.	
<b>8. PHOTOS</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

OSI Case #24-30

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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION (Cont'd)

8. Object was noticed accidentally and attention was not drawn to it by any specific occurrence, but because of daily association with aircraft.

9. Witnesses.

- a. SGT [REDACTED]
- b. 3538th Maintenance Squadron, Mather AFB, California
- c. Airman, United States Air Force
- d. Agency checks; neighbor and fellow employee checks; reveal no derogatory information. Observer is considered truthful and reliable.

10. SGT [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] actions and comments during discussion of incident would indicate persons of above average intelligence. It was apparent that [REDACTED] was extremely sincere in his report and that [REDACTED] was inclined to be influenced by [REDACTED] observations. All persons interviewed regarding SGT [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] stated that their character, integrity and dependability are of the highest caliber.

GENERAL

1. Local Weather Conditions, Sandberg Weather Station, California, 5 September 1949

- a. 1230 PST; no cloud cover; visibility 50 miles; wind SE at 15 knots; temperature 81°F; Dewpoint 22°F

2. Winds aloft, Sandberg, California, 1200 hours, 5 September 1949

7,000 feet - 250° at 15 knots

3. Aircraft in vicinity of Lebec, California, 1200 to 1300 hours, 5 September 1949

- a. L-13 type aircraft, AF #47-302, enroute to Ontario, Calif.
- b. L-13 type aircraft, AF #47-300, enroute to March AFB, Calif.
- c. No commercial or civilian aircraft reported in this area between the hours of 1200 and 1300, 5 September 1949.

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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION (Cont'd)

4. Weather reports from Mather Air Force Base, California, indicate that a pilot balloon for winds aloft testing purposes was released at Sandberg, California, shortly prior to 1300 hours, 5 September 1949. Pilot balloons are approximately twenty-six (26) inches in diameter, with an ascension rate of two hundred (200) to two hundred and sixty (260) yards per minute, and the type generally used on a clear day, such as reported on 5 September at Sandberg, is white in color. According to the Sandberg Winds Aloft Report, at this time the balloon would have drifted northwest towards Lebec during the first two thousand (2,000) feet of ascension, and then veered northeast towards Mojave, California.

5. Not applicable

6. Not applicable

7. Photostatic copies of sketches submitted by SGT ~~██████████~~ and ~~██████████~~ inclosed as Exhibits E and F respectively. Original copies of sketches on file at DO #19, Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California.

a. Object appeared oval in shape

b. Surrounding terrain is hilly with hills ranging to 8,000 feet.

c. Not applicable

d. Object rapidly gained altitude, seemed to pause, then sped away in level flight.

e. Not applicable

8. Statements secured. On file at 19th District Office of Special Investigations, Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California

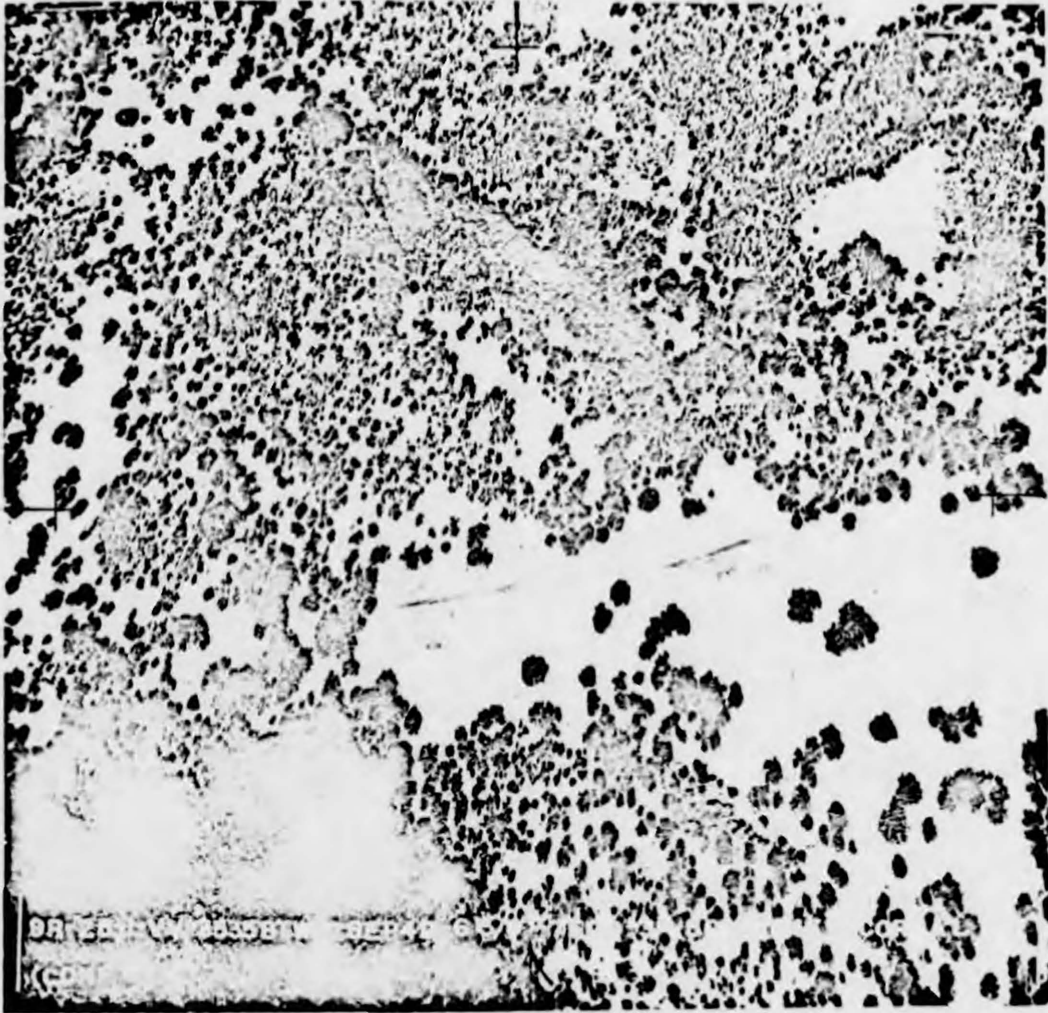
9. Not applicable

10. No projections of any kind were observed



Case includes four (4) photographs  
5" x 5"

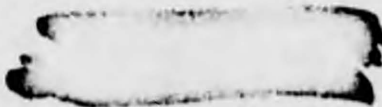
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EXHIBIT A, CSI Case #24-30

*Encl 1<sup>v</sup>*



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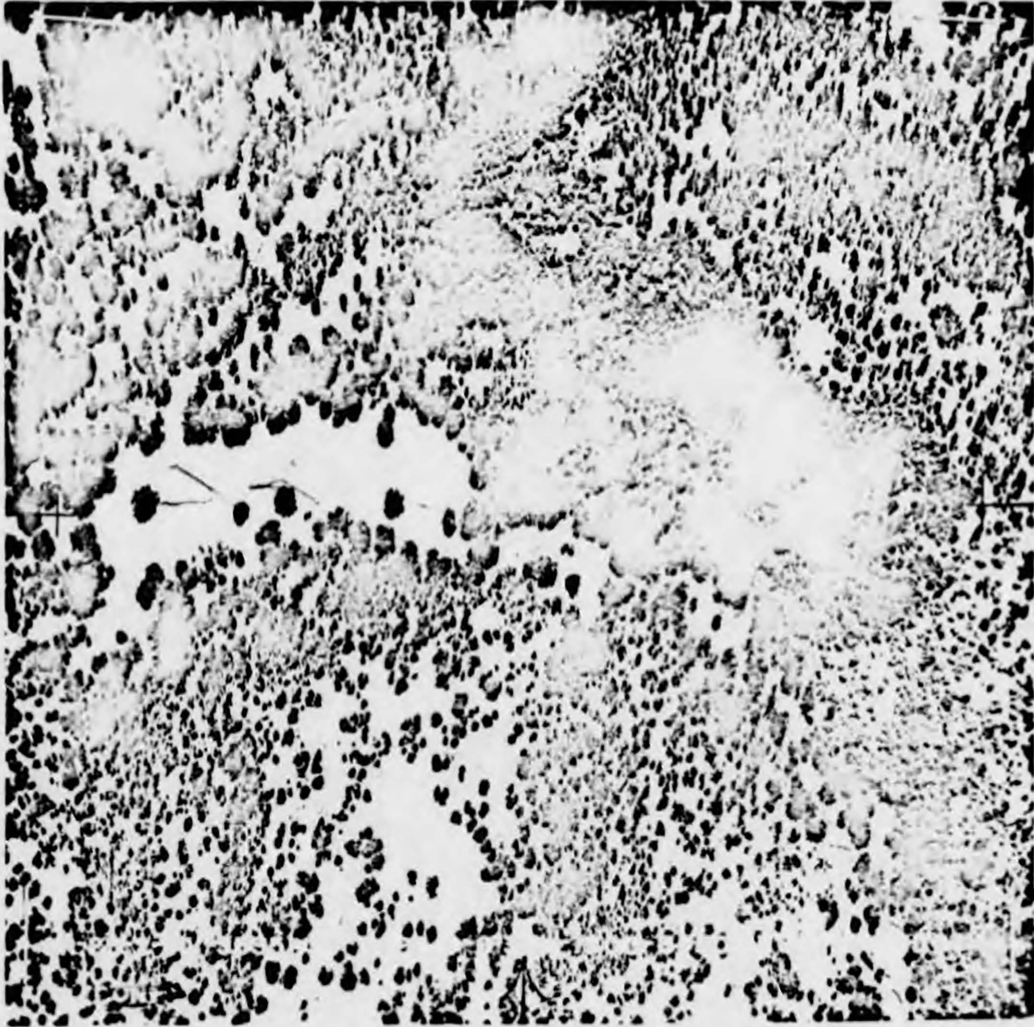
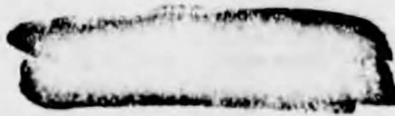


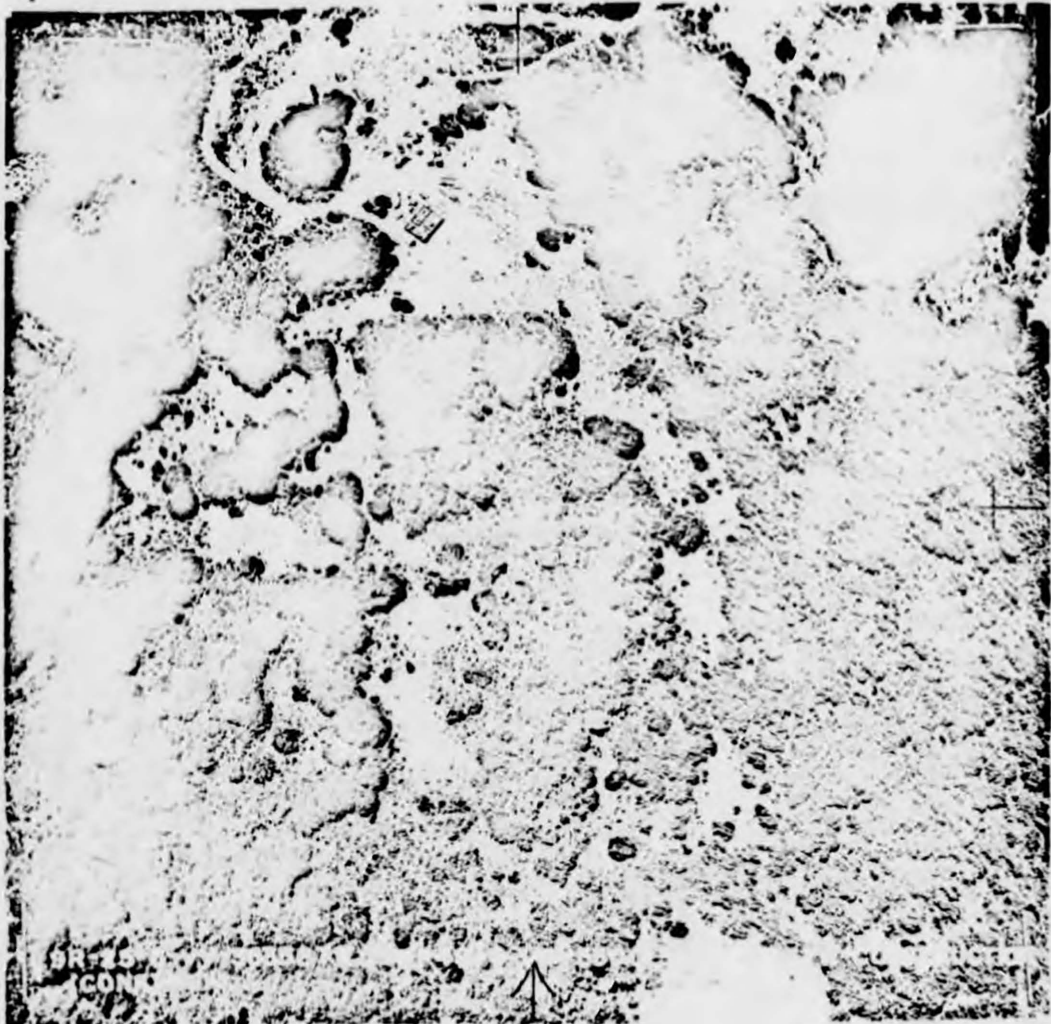
EXHIBIT B, OSI Case #24-30

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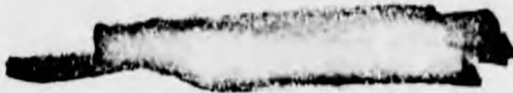
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EXHIBIT C, OSI Case #24-30

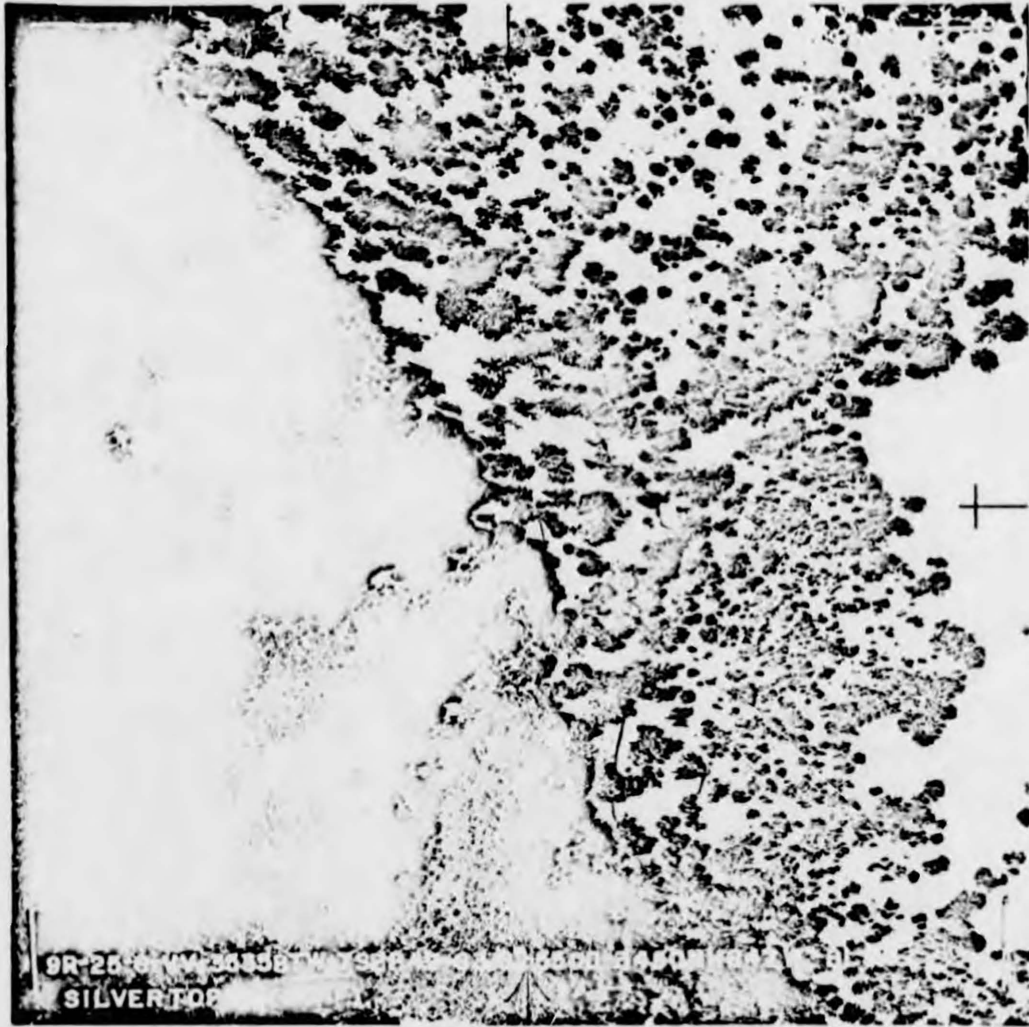
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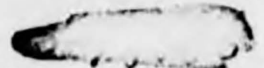
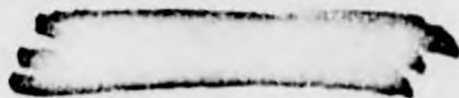
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EXHIBIT D, CSI Case #24-30

Final 15



Success submitted by 800 is  
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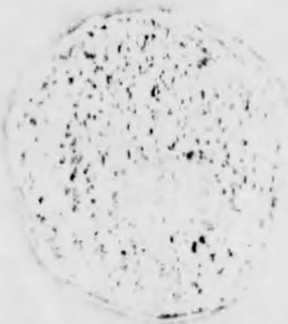


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