

June 7, 2025

“America’s UFO Mythology”

By Joel Schectman and Aruna Viswanatha

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A Rebuttal

Robert L. Salas

Since my name was mentioned in this article (p. 7) with respect to an incident I experienced while I was a Minuteman I (ICBM) missile launch officer, in command of a Launch Control Facility (LCF) in Montana, designated “Oscar 1” and false representations were made, I find it necessary to respond to those statements in the referenced article.

The article, on p. 8, states that Mr. Sean Kirkpatrick’s team of the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) “...discovered a terrestrial explanation” of what occurred. It further states that a large electromagnetic generator, requiring heavy concrete supports and sixty-foot posts supporting a platform was constructed near the front gate of the Oscar 1 LCF where it would fire a high voltage burst of energy, creating an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) to determine any vulnerabilities to our equipment and missiles. It further states “When activated, this device, placed on a portable platform 60 feet above the facility, would gather power until it glowed, sometimes with a blinding orange light. It would then fire a burst of energy that could resemble lightning. The electromagnetic pulses snaked down cables connected to the bunker where launch commanders like Salas sat, disrupting the guidance systems, disabling the weapons and haunting the men to this day. But any public leak of the test at the time would have allowed Russia to know that America’s nuclear arsenal could be disabled in a first strike. The witnesses were kept in the dark.”

My response to this fantasy is as follows:

1. I gave an over two-hour presentation to two members of the AARO team, on February 15, 2023. At the end of my presentation, I asked them if they were going to contact the U.S. Air Force to verify the factual events as I represented them. They replied that they would not be doing so because of the lack of cooperation from USAF. They never informed me that they had discovered some “terrestrial explanation” to my incident as stated above.
2. The USAF was certainly aware of the potential damage as a result of EMP from a nearby nuclear explosion and I and my co-author James Klotz wrote about this subject in our book, *Faded Giant* (pp 27-32). In addition, we listed references to EMP studies (pp33-34). With supporting statements from members of the Boeing investigative team, we concluded that EMP testing was not the cause of the missile shutdowns. If this had been the case, it surely would have been reflected in the historical documents and communications with investigators we received from that period.
3. All Minuteman crew members had high security clearances. We had detailed briefings, both classified and unclassified, on any activities in the field that could impact the status of our missile readiness each time we were sent out on Alert duties. In the three years I

was assigned as a missile launch officer at Malmstrom AFB, I was never briefed about any EMP testing on operational missiles.

4. It would have been irresponsible and unthinkable for the USAF to jeopardize the operational status of these weapons by doing such tests as they were, in part, the basis of our strategic national security, and especially since this time period was during the "Cold War" and we were engaged in the Vietnam war, and we had a near nuclear war during the Cuban missile crisis only a few years earlier.
5. As stated above the EMP generator equipment would have involved a prolonged installation process in plain sight of our security team at ground level of our LCF. Those activities would have been reported to us in the underground Launch Control Center (LCC) since we were in command of the facility. Our topside personnel never reported to us any such activity.
6. During our incident, our Flight Security Controller expressed extreme fear when reporting to me an object hovering just above the front gate of our LCF. In fact, all the security personnel were very frightened as we later learned. If there had been some sort of authorized test going on, they would not have experienced such fear.
7. During our incident our status panel showed an indication of possible incursion into two launch facilities (LF), the location of missiles. Security teams were sent to those sites to investigate but as they approached them, they reported seeing the same type of object hovering above those missiles. They again were so frightened to see them, they requested to go no further and return to the LCF.
8. Mr. Ray Fowler was a manager of Electrical Systems for the Minuteman I missile systems during the period of the Echo and Oscar flight incidents. He worked for Sylvania Corp., which was the contractor for those systems. Fowler had employees stationed at Malmstrom during this period who reported to him details of those incidents, including the reports of UFO activity. According to his affidavit, there was no report to him about conducting EMP testing at the operational sites where missiles were disabled.
9. One of the documents we received from our FOIA request was a Telex from Strategic Air Command (SAC) to various Minuteman bases, The original classification of that telex was SECRET. The subject was Loss of Strategic Alert, Echo Flight, Malmstrom AFB and dated March 17, 1967. In the body of this telex, it stated "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." Such a statement would not have been made by SAC headquarters if the shutdowns had resulted from EMP testing!
10. Per the SAC request, Boeing established an investigative team. It was headed by Mr. Robert Kaminski, who had been charged with running the Minuteman troubleshooting team. He contacted me shortly after I went public about my incident. He wrote a long letter, in which he stated, "The team met with me to report their findings and it was decided that the final report would have nothing significant in it to explain what happened at E-Flight. ...there was no technical explanation that could explain the event." (see pp. 25-26 of Faded Giant) There was no mention of any EMP testing with respect to this or any other incident.

11. The two Boeing engineers, requested by name in the SAC telex, Rigert and Dutton, confirmed in the Wing History Report that electrical power problems were ruled out as a possible cause.
12. According to the Dept. of Energy (DOE), There was no nuclear testing conducted on March 16 or March 24 that could have been a source of EMP.
13. There were multiple reports of UFO sightings near and over Malmstrom AFB on the evening of March 24, 1967, as stated in a report by the base operations officer.
14. Other witnesses to those and other sightings could be available to testify under improved witness protection assurances.

I, and other witnesses are available, and willing to testify under oath, as to the truth of the above statements.

I am sending this rebuttal to the Wall Street Journal and ask that they publish it and respond to the rebuttal statements as listed above.

Robert L. Salas