

Sign Oral History Project

**Oral History Interview with
James F. Bond, Sr. (USAF SSgt., ret.)**
November-Flight Security Controller
Minot AFB, ND, 24 October 1968

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Thomas Tulien
Sign Oral History Project

JB James Bond

TT Tom Tulien

[Tape start]

JB ...and see when I was making my reports I was talking directly to my capsule crew—they were doing the relaying to—

TT Do you recall those guy's names?

JB We were out there for a week.

TT Oh you were? I thought you did three-day shifts?

JB Depended. That particular time we were out there for a week 'cause there was—I'm not sure what it was, something about the rotation. Anyway, a lot of times in the winter you would be out there for—sometimes you'd be out two weeks.

TT Really?

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- JB You couldn't get out.
- TT Oh, they couldn't get the transport—
- JB —they wouldn't fly our people, a lot of times we'd fly back, bring the Huey out with the relief crew and fly the Huey back in. But most of the time they had to drive a bus from Minot, from the support base during white outs, snow, blizzard—you name it. That's how we got back and forth.
- TT No snowmobiles huh? (laughs)
- JB We had a TrackMaster in our garage we could use.
- TT Oh, if things got really bad.
- JB Did anybody ever try again to get ahold of Jablonski?
- TT Yeah I interviewed him.
- JB I'd like to spend more time to look at that [hands document binder back to TT].
- TT Sure. Was Adams afro-American? [Gregory Adams was the other SAT member].
- JB I don't believe so.
- TT Well he must have only been there for a short period of time
- JB I wish I could recall more about him—
- TT I think he was only there for a few months. I think they kind of put him in that position and he really didn't want to be there, and I think he was actually on his way out of the Air Force right then.
- JB Well yeah, that's possible.
- TT Do you remember your off-duty guys? Remember a guy named Wes Akre?
- JB Lets see, the crew that was off-duty was, there was an Airman First Class who was the other controller, I was the ranking NCO out there. And then he had the two Airmen that worked for him, and we had a cook—can't recall his name because they changed quite a bit—then we had the Facility Manager the person that took care of the cleanliness of the site and the upkeep and all that stuff. That's everybody that was out there,
- TT So you had 8 guys above ground and 2 below? Do you remember the other FSC's name?
- JB No unless it's in there somewhere [indicates binder].
- TT No it's not, Jablonski told us that one of the other SAT Team members that was off-duty at the time name was Wes Akre, A-k-r-e?
- JB That's very possible that name rings a bell.
- TT OK. Those guys didn't regularly work with you? Did you always have different security police?
- JB We pretty much had the same people that go out—somebody got sick or they were on annual leave or whatever, they'd always be replaced.
- TT Did you always work November?

JB Yeah.

TT OK, the whole time you were at Minot you were November FSC?

JB Except when we had the big flood there, they had a little river that ran through the city—

TT Lake Darling ran through there too, yeah?

JB This was Mouse River. And when the flood occurred, they called it the “Mouse that Roared,” and they had this big special edition paper that came out. A few of us worked with the civilian police in Minot for flood control to prevent looting and stuff like that and we were authorized to do that by the federal government ‘cause that’s the only time you can use federal troops.

TT Yeah, in an emergency like that. Let’s start with where you grew up, where you went to school, how you entered the military, how you ended up at Minot.

JB I grew up in Michigan. That was my home state.

TT Where in Michigan?

JB I was born in Flint and spent a lot of time there went to the northern area, which is around Tawas, Oscoda, that area, spent some time there. Came back to Flint 17 years old, a group of guys I was running with were in trouble with the law all the time, and I just did not want to find myself at Jackson, which is the big State Pen there. In fact, they call it the largest walled prison in the United States so at that time my dad was in the National Guard and I told him what I wanted to do, I wanted to enlist. I went first to the Navy. The Navy recruiter was not in so I was walking down the hallway and the Air Force recruiter stuck his head out, “Say, come in here don’t go away,” so that’s how I wound up and went to basic training at Lackland in San Antonio.

TT That was where a lot of you guys did your basic.

JB At that time that’s the only basic training facility there was.

TT What year was that?

JB That was 1955.

TT OK, that was the year I was born so that gives me some perspective (laughs).

JB I was 17 years old then.

TT Yeah so Lackland, you did 6 months?

JB Our basic training was about three months, but because I had gotten pneumonia I had to spend an extra month, I was what you called a wash back to a flight of new people, and had to start over again so—

TT So you were there for 6 months or something.

JB Yeah, that was basic training.

TT And then how did the decision come for you to go into the security police?

JB Well to begin with I wasn’t even considering that. After I got out of basic training I had a score high enough on my aptitude test to become an Aircraft Load Master, which is a part of an aircrew line up, and we were working on C-119 aircraft at that time. Charleston,

South Carolina was one of my first bases where we were involved in another classified program at dealing with missile nose cone recovery using the C-119 aircraft.

TT Oh, to catch them in the air? I have seen pictures of those nets strung out across—

JB Actually, they were two long poles coming out the back of the aircraft and nylon cable, that's what the catch was and the packages were all rigged with a pointed object on them like a spear, and that's what we caught—either in the air, or if it fell in the water, soon as it hit the water, it popped up, we could catch them in the water.

TT Huh. So you'd track, maybe they'd give you radar coordinate and then you'd get a visual on and then you'd position the—?

JB A lot of times it was already known that the package would be coming down. But we never got a live package, all of ours were practice and we did most of it down in Charleston, South Carolina off the jetties.

TT So these were the first reconnaissance satellites?

JB Right, that's what it was.

TT The Corona program?

JB Yeah. I ruptured myself on a mission and I was grounded. Couldn't fly anymore so I had a choice of things I could do on the ground and I worked in a dining room for a while, peeling the potatoes until I could make up my mind what to do, or what they want me to do—and that's not what I wanted to do. A couple of buddies of mine were in the Air Police, that's what it was called at the time, and I went and talked to their adjutant officer and the commander and went and took a test and qualified enough to get into it. So I started on-the-job training, I never went to their tech school; all of mine was on the job training or OJT as they called it.

TT Oh really, I bet there was a huge demand for that position in the late '50's because they were just opening the missile field.

JB There was.

TT So you didn't go through any training programs.

JB Not at Lackland. I went through a lot of training programs you know. When I became a part of the law enforcement career field we went through a lot of training. I was an instructor after I learned how to do different things—I was an attack instructor, a riot control, accident investigation. At Lackland we had the basic training school for Air Police, security and law enforcement and I helped work with some of them, plus and I was assigned to the base police unit at Lackland, which is like your city police.

Now how I got to Lackland to begin with, on my second enlistment I came back from Minot, well I was at Minot and said, "I'm tired of this cold weather. I'm tired of standing out here freezing cold."

TT And the date is?

JB It was after basic training.

TT Oh so it was still in the late 50s?

JB Well no. That particular incident happened after I left Minot. I only spent one tour at Minot and this was after, so it would have been after '68. That's how I got away from Minot was to apply for drill instructor, D.I., at Lackland. So I did that, our school was 13 weeks, teach you how to become a drill instructor, to train the young people coming in. I stayed with that about seven months. I got burned out on it. You get burned out on it real quick.

TT Are you talking about yelling at these guys and—

JB Yep (nodding). Run through each, they call them "flights." Each flight had approximately 60 men in it, or boys is what they were. I got tired of that, spent about seven months, got out of it I went to—a couple of friends of mine that were in the police unit on base they got me to go talk to their commander. I cross-trained over into base police and started on-the-job training there. I was an E-5 Staff Sergeant at the time, worked my way up through all the different various positions that you have to work there, from accident investigation to patrol, to writing traffic tickets and that is how I got into training at Lackland. We didn't have a ceremonial team and I formed that up and we did a lot of training for different drill and ceremonies that were going on.

If we had a veteran in the area that the Army refused to provide his ceremony for because he did not serve his full time in the Army [during] World War II, my unit was contacted by a United States Senator from Texas, asked if we could do anything. My commander, Colonel Davidson, said let me talk to my team, he came and asked me how quick I could get our unit together, would we want to do it, did we have any problems with it. I said no sir; we'll get right out there. In fact, it was the next day, that's why he was in a hurry to do it. We got all kind of good letters and stuff in from that.

TT Yeah I'll bet. So you said Davidson? B.H. Davidson, Colonel?

JB He was a Colonel. He was our security police commander. I'm sure I've got his signature on something in there.

TT So you were at Charleston through the late 50's?

JB Right, I was there '56-'57. I left Charleston and went to a base not too far from here, Sewart Air Force Base out in Symrna.¹

TT I haven't heard of that one.

JB Well the base is still there, but they're using it mostly for civilian aircraft now. There's a Tactical Air Command base, you had C-130's and other aircraft like that there. Stayed at Sewart about three years, left there and went to Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Michigan, which is a SAC base. I worked mostly—

TT They have B-52s there, or what were they flying?

JB They had B-52's, KC-135's, and I was assigned to security, which meant humping them birds that were on alert out there in what we called the "Mohole Area," the alert area, where all were uploaded and waiting to go. And let's see after Wurtsmith I went to Okinawa. Another thing, when we were at Wurtsmith our unit went to Vietnam on a temporary duty deployment. We were there about 8 months, and that happened in June of 1964.

- TT And you were in Okinawa in July of '65?
- JB Yeah.
- TT And you were you up in Alaska in '56 too?
- JB Yeah we had a temporary duty deployment up there too—Kodiak Island.
- TT Training for recovery or whatever it was called?
- JB No. What happened at that time, I was with a security unit and we just, well our aircraft were doing that, but I was not with that unit anymore doing that. I had been grounded long before. We were just temporary duty. Kodiak at that time there was a Naval Air Station and they were flying P2B Neptune submarine killers out of there. So we spent about seven months there, let's see from Kodiak we went to, I believe I came back to Sewart, I had two tours of duty at Wurtsmith. In fact, Wurtsmith was where I was when I retired.
- TT Two tours, how many years would that be?
- JB The first time was maybe two and a half years or so. The second tour was when I came back to Clark Air Force Base from the Philippines. I stayed at Wurtsmith for about a year, maybe a little over a year, and that's when I retired.
- TT OK. And you retired as Staff Sergeant?
- JB Yeah. I had some problems with some of my supervisors, couldn't even get along with—anytime you're in a position of authority and you have to deal with people that deal with other people—and they're trying to make a name for themselves, or they're trying to get you to you know, "this is a buddy of mine don't do this, don't do that" and I was never the one for looking the other way.
- TT Yeah, some of the other guys talked about problems they had and reasons they left the service.
- TT Did you serve 20 years?
- JB Yeah I did 20 years, 21 days.
- TT Yeah, you did mention in your form that you had seen something in Alaska and in Okinawa in '66 and '65. Do you want to talk about that a little bit?
- JB That's a real fuzzy area. I do remember seeing something. I wasn't the only one, there were other people that saw it and in Okinawa we had, I worked base police and security there, and one of our security functions was to escort missiles, we had missiles in Okinawa...
- TT Air to ground?
- JB They were, yeah. I don't recall what the name of them was at the time. They were tactical, and there were some Army missiles there at the same time, and about the only connection we had with them was to escort them if we moved one, escort them back and forth, and we were pretty much told that during an escort if a vehicle gets in front of you, or won't give you the right of way put them off the road.
- TT You call them a National Security Zone.
- JB Yeah, even though we are not in the United States. We made a few Okinawans not happy.

TT I can imagine.

JB A lot of tragedy I saw in Okinawa. I witnessed 4 different aircraft crashes and a lot of guys killed. The last one was a KC-135 that was carrying, I think it had 25 guys going back to the world, or the United States on emergency leave and it crashed on take off. It went across Highway One, and the nose of the aircraft came to rest just past the entry gate where the security officer was, to one of the largest weapons areas over in that area—

TT In '68 there was a B-52 that crashed at Minot, I don't know if you recall that.

JB Yeah. I didn't, fact one of the 52's that crashed there on base, I was coming out of the personnel building one day when it happened. I saw all the smoke and everything. The other base I didn't mention was Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico.

TT Oh you were you down there.

JB I was there, my youngest daughter from a previous marriage was born there in '68.

TT What were you doing at Holloman?

JB Another thing I left out—trying to think of the base we were at. When you get old your memory starts going you know? We went to Chambley Air Force Base, France [Chambley-Bussieres Air Base]. Our unit was flying F-84's, which is an older jet and we were in four bases in France, Chambley, Phalsbourg [Phalsbourg-Bourscheid Air Base], Chamount [Chaumont-Semoutiers Air Base—April 1962], and Etain [Étain - Rouvres Air Base] were the names of the bases there. I had a good time there because we got to go pretty much all over Europe. And we came back, when we'd left and they closed the base down, the French were getting a little worried about Americans being there after they got all the money they wanted. Our entire wing left and went to Holloman Air Force base [July 1963], that's how I got to Holloman.

TT Oh, OK. How long were you in Holloman?

JB I was in Holloman I guess about a year and a half—somewhere in there, working flight line security. My daughter was born there in '68 but I would have to go look at my papers.

TT After that you would have gone to Minot?

JB Yeah, while we were at Holloman we had another temporary duty assignment to Vietnam then came back to Holloman. I can't think where I went after that, I did so much moving around, so many temporary duties. Holloman was a nice place. I worked mostly security there and our unit was 366th Tac Fighter Wing, and then they converted to F-4 Phantoms. That unit went to Vietnam while we were still over there.

TT So that's Tactical Air Command?

JB Yeah, Tactical Air Command. Now at Holland they've got the Blackbirds I think it's the 71st Recon.

[break in recording]

TT You mentioned two sightings, one in Alaska in '56 and another in Okinawa in '65, what might you have seen?

JB Lights mainly.

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- TT Just lights in areas where they shouldn't have been?
- JB Yeah.
- TT Did they do any investigation of them at the time?
- JB Not that I know of and we never got into it—the people that were around the area that saw it beside me said “Well there ain't no reason to say anything about it because nobody is gonna—”
- TT You felt like it you should have reported it is that what you are saying?
- JB Yeah, I think it should have been. The lights were kind of similar to the ones at the Minot incident—it was that type of a thing, I mean, they were there and then they'd move and they'd go to another area, up, sideways you know, and quickly.
- TT These sightings went on over a period of time?
- JB Ten minutes, maybe.
- TT Not over 10 minutes?
- JB Probably not. And then it could have been there long time before. I remember somebody calling my attention to it, it was wintertime and a lot of snow on the ground, and we had a big mountain range behind us on the base. Kodiak Island I don't know if you have ever seen it or not, but it is a big volcano basically, with a large mountain range around it. Now there is nothing spectacular about, about the reporting of it or anything else.
- TT Were you seeing them out over the water or back against the mountain or?
- JB No they were over the top of the mountain range.
- TT So they were pretty high up.
- JB It was a starry night, I mean there were stars out but when you look at a star a star might twinkle a little bit but it doesn't do erratic things like that did.
- TT Yeah even in the Minot case Quintanilla wanted to say you guys were seeing stars, the star Sirius.
- JB No. There weren't any stars that low.
- TT Well Sirius was in the southeast.
- JB No. They weren't stars.
- TT So you arrived at Minot in, again in '68 or early '68
- JB Something after that, because when I left Minot I went to the Philippines.
- TT So how long were you at Minot?
- JB More than a year.
- TT So through into '69.
- JB I wouldn't have been there at all if I had my druthers, but—
- TT (Laughs) those were cold times up there. I remember, I grew up in Minnesota and—

- JB No, to place time on it, it was during the Ice Bowl when Dallas and who was it played that game up there? Maybe it was Green Bay. They called it the Ice Bowl.
- TT Yeah, I know the one you're talking about.
- JB We went to that game. Yeah, we had plenty of antifreeze with us (laughs). That was the coldest man; I don't think I enjoyed that game at all.
- TT So your first assignment in Minot was as a Flight Security Controller?
- JB No, I was with the missile team the whole time I was there. You have to go through a certain period of training for their systems, everything we did out there was by Code Packs. All of our communication when we left base, went out to the field for duty, the first thing that you do is stop, they had a telephone there, you would call the Transportation Division give them your vehicle number, how many were in your party, where you were going to, and you would authenticate one of their security people over the phone every time you left the support base.
- TT So they must have had a huge schedule on the wall there, and they just kept track of everybody constantly.
- JB Yeah, especially in the winter, 'cause it would be real easy to get out there where nobody could find you. I remember a lot of whiteouts when we were going from the missile field back to the support base, walking in front of the bus to make sure we were still on the road. Big 'ol parka pulled up, little hole like that (gestures) where you could see through.
- TT How did you remove the snow from the drive into the launch security facility?
- JB Well, we had shovels there.
- TT So you had to shovel all that?
- JB Well, out there, the wind blew quite a bit, so. The only time it would get really bad is if we had snow and then it would get warm enough to melt it, and it would freeze again.
- TT Did you start out as a Flight Security Controller then?
- JB Uh huh.
- TT So they gave you November right away and you were there the whole period of time you were there?
- JB Well, you go in there and you work with another Flight Security Controller on-the-job training until you learn everything. I guess you could say until they trust you to be able to operate it by yourself.
- TT So by October '68 you had gone through your training?
- JB Oh yeah. I had been out there a while as Flight Security Controller.
- TT Right, let's talk about your procedures.
- JB When you leave support base and you get out to the missile field—depending on which one you were assigned to—and it easily took us about an hour and a half, maybe two hours depending on the weather to get to the missile field, or the missile site itself, where the Launch Control Facility, LCF was. It was surrounded by a fence, not electrified, you had a garage off to the side when you came through the gate, and there were antennas,

monitoring equipment. There was another smaller building we used for storage back by the garage. The garage was where we could park one of our vehicles, which we used to strike the site if we needed to. By “strike the site,” if we had an alarm, we would go out. We also had a Thiokol TrackMaster² in there, which you may have seen them in the movies. They use them up in the Alps. It’s a big box thing that sets on top of a track vehicle, and you steer it like this (gestures) just like you do a Cat.

TT You guys ever drive that thing?

JB Oh yeah. It was fun. They go about 40 miles an hour.

TT Really?

JB Yeah. And then we had the Launch Control Facility building, which housed, in the front, the office where I would sit, and where weapons were stored, and a couple of lockers for clothes. There was a desk, a radio and all my code packs I would use during a tour of duty. Right beside the desk here (gesturing) was the door leading to the elevator, which went down approximately 62 feet below where the Combat Crew was. And then beside my desk was this box about this big (gestures maybe 18 inches square) with wire mesh in the bottom of it, strong steel mesh. So once you use your code page, you burn it and you put it in this thing and scratch all the ashes so that they are all gone. That’s what happened after you authenticate using your code packs. We had a certain code pack and the missile maintenance people had a different kind, but basically all the same. Inside the facility, back to the right where my desk would have been, out to another area, the door going outside, and then a little hallway, and a little recreation area with couches, chairs, a TV set, a pool table—stuff like that. And then down a hallway was sleeping areas and bathroom, bathing facilities, shower. Everything was above ground. There was nothing we had that was underground.

TT And your principal responsibility was to the two guys underground?

JB My primary responsibility was to respond to any alarms at any of our missiles we had out in the field.

TT OK, and those really came through the guys down below?

JB Right, the alarms came to them. Mainly it was our Combat Crew, the two officers down in the hole that would alert us.

TT Yeah, OK. So you were their eyes and ears above ground essentially?

JB Right.

TT I mean your procedure was you had six Security Policemen out there, essentially two FSCs and two separate strike teams— two on, two off. Were there times that everybody would be sent out? Like if you had a couple alarms?

JB We could, we had done that. But you don’t want to keep them out there, and in a case like that you would call the Support Base. The Support Base would send out a camper team. Camper Team would come out, just like you would see a pickup truck going down the road, it’s got this thing on its back it was a camper and they had a stove, a microwave oven there to cook their meals in and they literally lived in that. They would go out and relieve

my team that was out there—my team would come back to the LCF. They would go out and stay until the site was reset or maintenance came out and fixed whatever it was.

TT How often did you have alarms go off?

JB Quite a bit. Each one of the missile sites where the hardened area was, it was inside of a fence, the fence was not electrified—we could not have electrified fences because they were out in the middle of farm field.

TT Yeah, you would have a bunch of dead animals around there.

JB That would look strange. Inside the fence the only thing you could see were two radar columns on the top and they were kinda shaped like this (gestures). There was one on each corner, say the east corner and the west corner, and they picked up anything that went in front of it.

TT So they were sort of facing away from the gate?

JB Right. And then there's the door, which covered the missile. It was huge. It was probably about the size of this living room rug right here.

TT Did they call it a B-Plug or something like that?

JB Well, they had two different areas, now we could get into what they called the "A" area. We could get in and reset, they would give us code, we could go in and reset that.

TT Reset what?

JB Reset the code. If an alarm went off we could try and reset it.

TT Now you're talking about an inner alarm as opposed to a perimeter alarm.

JB Yeah either alarm. And perimeter alarm, well my guys, sometimes they'd go out and smack the antenna horn with a shovel or something like that and it would reset. They could be set off by a rabbit running through it.

TT But normally that's what you were responding to are perimeter alarms, right?

JB Inner and outer.

TT Oh you'd get a lot of inner alarms?

JB Yeah, we had inner alarms, and a lot of times if they wouldn't reset, that's when we had to go out and we'd stay put until—Inner perimeters involved something on top of—

TT Accessing the silo.

JB Yeah.

TT In the documents they talk about the maintenance guy, when they drove by O-7, saw the door open for the access hatch? So there was a metal cover on it or something?

JB Yeah, you can open that door, it has a lock on it keys.

TT Has a lock? Like a padlock or something?

JB Yeah, It's an access cover, yeah like a hatch it raises up, kind of round shaped it opens like this (gestures).

- TT Sort of like a Navy hatch I guess you might call it.
- JB Yeah.
- TT And underneath that there's what?
- JB Well, you'd see a combination lock, something like that.
- TT So it took two separate teams to access that.
- JB Right, what you have to remember about nuclear weapons there's always gotta be two of everything. Two-man policy, SAC two man policy is what they called it, and believe it or not I can still recite this: "any time a completed nuclear weapon, a disassembled nuclear weapon, or a nuclear component is not in complete secure storage, not less than two authorized persons, each capable of detecting incorrect procedures with respect to the task being performed, will be allowed physical presence of the weapon." You better know that policy. It was to keep one person from doing something the other one didn't know anything about.
- TT Let's say that you had to access the silo to do whatever; lets say a retargeting out there. What was your job in assisting them to access it?
- JB We would be outside the site. Once they got in, it was their site—it was theirs. Matter of fact, we'd probably leave.
- TT Did you need to provide keys or codes to access that?
- JB Yeah we could. Now we didn't have to be there, they would put in their codes and that would open up top to where they could get down to the missile, without blowing the door.
- TT Yeah, they'd drop that plug down that big steel plug and then they could get in—
- JB Then they had access to the missile there.
- TT 'cause once you opened that door...
- TT But you didn't have the keys for it?
- JB No.
- TT Did you have a key to open that access to the combinations?
- JB To ours.
- TT OK, and you guys probably also had a key to the Soft Support Building? Where like the maintenance guys went to check the cooling systems and generators? That's what they went out there to do.
- JB No, there wasn't any of that none of that was in the missile site. Not involving the missile—
- TT They would have to call you if they went into that Soft Support they had to authenticate?
- JB Yeah, we would go out there and meet them. They would have already authenticated with the base. We'd get out there and see who they were and check their identification and everything, they wouldn't go on the site until we got there. Once they got there—
- TT But wait a second, they would have to go on the site to call you?

JB Yeah, well, they would be at the site, we'd know they were coming. As soon as they left the base, we knew they were coming because Transportation would call. We would meet them. They wouldn't go in there by themselves because they might get shot.

TT Yeah.

JB Not a good thing to do.

TT So, they kept you pretty busy then it sounds like you were constantly going through checklists, stuff like that?

JB Yeah, we had one we'd run through about every two hours or so, "did I do this, have I done this?" You would have a call the Support Base, you would have to check in with your capsule crew make sure everything was still all right.

TT In the documents they talk about O-7 was broken into. How often did you have a site where there was a break-in? Where, for example, doors were left wide open and there's nobody around?

JB I don't remember anything like that at November.

TT No. I mean in the documents they make it sound like it happens all the time. What would happen if somebody had a key went inside that facility messing around and got caught?

JB Where the missile is? We would arrest them; they would be turned over to the federal authorities.

TT Yeah, the only reason I am asking is they're saying in here, "we had a couple incidents like that a year ago" where a couple of AP's were pranksters, had keys—

JB No, we didn't. I think what they are talking about is, and we heard about it too, they said they had a team drove past one of the sites one time, because we didn't stop at the site, you know, if there was no alarm there. Just drive past them, patrol, and most of my guys would, that's what they did, was drive around patrol the site. You had 15 of them out there that you had to check, So, once in a while you might go out and you might see maybe the chain was not hanging right on the gate or something like that and you'd stop and investigate. We'd heard where one of the teams drove past and the gate was standing wide open—but I'm thinking that incident, it was some farms boys who were out there trying to have some fun, but they took some bolt cutters and just cut it and just left it open. They didn't go on the site because they didn't set anything off, is what we heard. It wasn't that common.

TT They were probably sitting waiting to test your response or something, you know.

JB Yeah, we'd had them do that before too. We had a farmer run into one of the gates one time with his tractor.

TT But, do you recall any times where AP's had pulled pranks like that—not cutting the lock?

JB No not that I knew of.

TT They had keys, the padlock was undone the gates were wide open.

JB Was that Oscar?

TT Yeah, Oscar-7. They had opened the hatch to access the combos and had turned it off the settings. They investigated it the next morning, sent a Lieutenant out, and he could find no

tracks, no evidence that anybody was on the site. The FSC from Oscar was there that next day with this lieutenant while they investigated the site. He said they had a Geiger counter and in the area where you park, where the helicopters lands, you know where you park vehicles within the security fence—

JB Yeah.

TT —found a ring, a circle of radiated material, I mean not dangerously high levels, but higher it was distinct.

JB I'm thinking I read something about that in the report but we didn't have any knowledge of it. Nothing like that happened at November.

TT I mean basically what they are saying is somebody went in there—

JB Its like anything else, you've got people that may not be in the right frame of mind—they could be the Vice President of the United States and do some weird stuff.

TT Yeah. But the coincidences, at the same time a UFO paced a B-52, (laughs) landed on the ground and was flown over, and 16 ground witnesses saw UFOs over three hours when this break in occurred, you followed what I'm saying?

JB Yeah.

TT You keep piling these coincidences on it, you begin to wonder. I wonder if one way they took the interest away from what may have been going at some of the other missile sites was to literally go to O-7 to do the break in and then focus all the attention on that.

JB That's what I was going to say, that would have been possible, something like that to happen. The team could have gone over there, opened up the site, flipped up the alpha and then left. Where the radiation would have come from, I have no idea because we didn't have access to that stuff.

TT You don't recall Oscar-7. Do you recall where that was in the missile field?

JB No. It could have been Lima it could have been Mike.

TT Yeah. So you don't recall any other—

JB We did talk amongst ourselves you know, I could call one of the other FSC's—you know "what's going on?" and stuff like that.

TT So you weren't hearing about any other missile site incidences that night?

JB No, everything was kind of around that area at that time.

TT Yeah, yeah it was. It was pretty located actually, although you know at one point that thing was 40 miles out at 20,000 feet when it, when the B-52 picked it up, so it traveled that far out too. What you guys didn't know at the time that you were seeing the thing, in fact they were reporting it from N-7, there was one pacing the B-52.

JB Yeah I remember my capsule crew telling me that.

TT So it sounds like two, two different objects, you know.

JB Could have been, all I saw was the one though.

- TT Let's talk about what you can remember. How were you notified about it, and can you talk about the incident itself, the events anyway?
- JB As near as I can recollect, my capsule crew called me and asked me if I saw anything out of the ordinary and strange and, you know, what direction, they told me to look over towards—I think it was Mike, we pretty much know what direction another field was in and—
- TT Yeah, Mike was southwest of you.
- JB Yeah, kinda in that area, and at that time I did not see anything. I went over to the window and I turned my lights off inside the room—so I didn't, because with the lights on, you couldn't see outside, really. So I turned all the lights off and after a while, I got, yeah, I did see something over there, so I called them back and told them about what I saw, about the light and they told me, well, believe it or not, there's a maintenance crew over there that's really scared out of their gourds because this thing is right in the area where they're at, and they're trying to do a reprogram on one of the birds that's in one of the holes over there—and I thought that a little strange.
- TT You would know about that?
- JB Um hum
- TT You would have been notified that they were doing that particular type of work?
- JB Well, only if it was on our site in November.
- TT OK. Oh at this point you didn't know if they were referring to N-7, or were they referring to some other some other missile flight?
- JB I didn't know which, I thought it was some other site they were referring to.
- TT Oh, OK. So all that communication was going to the Combat Crew and coming up to you?
- JB Yeah. I didn't have communication with anybody over there. Only people I had communication with was my two guys that were out roaming, doing their stuff.
- TT Yeah, OK and then what happened?
- JB I watched for, I don't know how long it was, then, you know, I was also talking to Central Security Control [WSC] back at the Support Base, telling them what was going on, and they were asking me all of these questions about, you know, how many? What kind? What color? Have you had any alarms? I said "no," you know, anything goes out, my combat crew's gonna be the first one to tell me. But, other than that, and the combat crew did tell me that there was a B-52 being rerouted to the area and they were gonna check on it, they also told me that they had been talking to the B-52 crew by radio from the capsule and about seeing the thing, it following them, also about losing all communications in their airplane when it got close to them, and for how many minutes they had no contact with the support base or anything else, Yeah, that was real strange.
- TT Well, it was a little bit stranger because all they lost was their transmission.
- JB Um hum.
- TT As far as you know they lost all their communications, but they could receive, but couldn't transmit which was, you know, odd in itself too.

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- JB Yeah.
- TT So you were watching it from inside the building. Was your SAT team with you at the time?
- JB No, they were out.
- TT Jablonski and Adams, they were out?
- JB They were out and I couldn't leave where I was to go in the back and wake up [break in recording] and let them come up and—
- TT So what did you do next?
- JB They went to where the maintenance team was.
- TT Right, did you just call them on the radio?
- JB Yeah, I talked to them on it, I had my little mike right there on my desk and talked to them. We didn't have fancy things like they get now with the headphones and the earpiece and mouthpiece.
- TT Do you recall where they were at the time?
- JB No.
- TT How long did you watch it?
- JB It couldn't have been too long, maybe 15 minutes, maybe 10 minutes.
- TT And this object was in sight basically that whole time?
- JB Yeah, pretty much. It moved, at one time I lost focus of it, it came back, it was [break in recording] and—
- [Changes tape]
- TT OK, so you were observing it from inside your building?
- JB Right.
- TT You had big picture windows there?
- JB Not big picture windows, I couldn't go outside, because if I did I'd be off my post. You know, unless there was a fire that drove me outside the building. So all of my sightings were from inside, and I made sure what I was seeing was what I was seeing, that's when I turned the lights out—because a big neon light shined on the window.
- TT Right, you sent Jabonski and Adams down, were you in radio contact with them on their way?
- JB Yeah.
- TT Were they seeing anything at that time, do you recall?
- JB I don't believe they reported seeing anything right then, but then, when they got closer to the site, that's when they—
- TT So they let you know?

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- JB Yeah, well they were pretty much telling me that they were seeing the same thing, and it was moving, they said that a series of strange looking things and “I don’t hear anything” and from where I was I didn’t hear any, ‘course I was quite a bit of ways from it.
- TT So you were seeing it kind of low on the horizon?
- JB Yeah.
- TT Did it ever go up high into the sky?
- JB Not that I—it basically stayed low from where I was at, like if I were looking through the window right here, it would be like halfway above where that tree is over there.
- TT Right, you were 10 miles north of N-7?
- JB Probably.
- TT About 20-30 miles from base, Minot AFB?
- JB About thirty, maybe a little over 30 miles. We were closer to Canada than we were to base. We were about three miles from the Canadian border.
- TT So they met the maintenance team, do you recall them talking about that at all?
- JB No, and that wasn’t unusual, I do remember radio chatter and things like that, but exactly what was said now, I don’t remember.
- TT Yeah and again your combat team were they still in the loop on the communications and everything through this whole time. So you were in contact with them constantly, down below?
- JB Pretty much, all I had to do was pick up. I had a phone that went directly to them.
- TT Oh, so you weren’t like talking to them all the time but...
- JB We talked for one time, we talked for maybe 20-25 minutes without me hanging up the phone. I’m saying, “Boy I wish I could see that.”
- TT Were you ever in contact with Base Operations Dispatcher?
- JB No only Central Security Control.
- TT Which would be what Wing Security Control?
- JB Yeah.
- TT You called it Central or...?
- JB Central, yep that was CSC. Central Security Control.
- TT Was there a Wing Security Control?
- JB There was, now our Central Security Control was for the missile field. Security for the B-52s and all that stuff, the rest of the base was separate from them and they didn’t have anything to do with—but they were in the same building.
- TT Right, it was all under the 862nd Combat Support Group?
- JB Whatever the Wing was. We were under the 91st.
- TT Yeah.

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JB Now the other, the security police they didn't have anything to do with us, we didn't have anything to do with them.

TT OK. Do you remember the Wing Commander?

JB No.

TT Colonel B.H. Davidson?

JB Now, the only Davidson I had as a commander was at Lackland. He was a bird Colonel.

TT OK, so they're down there with the maintenance team. Do you recall being notified about the B-52?

JB Yeah, the capsule crew told me.

TT Ah, what did they tell you?

JB That there was one being diverted. It had come back from somewhere, they didn't tell me where it came back from—it wasn't one that they dispatched from the base. It had already been somewhere else on a mission, and was coming back to the base and they sent it to that area.

TT Did they tell you what the results of that were?

JB Yeah.

TT They did? What do you recall?

JB About the lights, about the crew telling them what they were seeing, they didn't tell me which crewmember they were talking to about losing communications with the base. Not much more than that they were pretty tight lipped about it. They wanted to know what I was seeing.

TT Yeah, at that point things were heated up a little bit with the B-52 getting involved. Did you see the B-52 from your position at N-1?

JB No.

TT You couldn't see that far.

JB No.

TT Could you see N-7 with the security lights on from your position?

JB No.

TT Yeah, it's 10 miles, I was just curious. Jablonski thought he could. Jablonski remembers he was at N-1 at the time you got the call, and that everybody went outside, was standing outside looking at it. Now obviously, you'd probably stay inside.

JB Yeah, they may have been. I didn't leave to go get anybody. You could have everybody up all at one same time in the Rec area, shooting pool, watching TV, reading or whatever else—they didn't all sleep all the time. Another thing we had to do was check our ground temperature.

TT Oh, why was that?

JB Well the base would call and want to know what your ground temperature was.

- TT Oh, wanted to know what the temperatures was underground where the missile silos are.
- JB Yeah, we had on the site itself, embedded in the concrete, a hole about like this (gestures about a foot diameter) that we would take the cap off, and go down in and pull up this big thermometer and you could tell what the temperature was. Then you seal it back up and put it back in there.
- TT Tell me about the hardened antennas. I think I read in the unit history, that they were in the process of updating or changing them or hardening them?
- JB Oh, they were always talking about doing that because of the number of false alarms. The antenna that was up there I believe was made by Westinghouse, but I'm not sure. They were cone shaped it was shaped kinda like this (gestures).
- TT So not really a dish, more like a cone.
- JB And it would catch the ground and anything like the top of the fence and that area and one would be facing this way, and the other would face this way, so it would pretty much catch anything across the site.
- TT Now are you talking about the LFs?
- JB Yeah, well on the missile site itself.
- TT But how about at the Launch Control Facility? There is a hardened antenna there for communications?
- JB Yeah.
- TT That was basically all your communications with base, with SAC Headquarters?
- JB Yeah, because if something happened to Support Base, you could bypass them and go directly to SAC.
- TT Oh you could. Did you ever talk to SAC?
- JB No.
- TT I'm going to have you just read this. This is the base—
- JB Can we stop a few minutes?
- TT Oh sure.
- [Break in recording]
- JB [Reading Blue Book documents from binder]. Yeah, I knew the maintenance team was waiting, in fact the maintenance team was the one that the combat crew was getting their information from and they were telling me that was a real, you know, a real shaky thing, to get a team out on a site and especially if they were doing a retarget or whatever like that, because the missile is open and it's vulnerable—
- TT Yeah, I mean they weren't accessing the silo, they went to do some maintenance in the Soft Support to the A/C system
- JB Yeah. Even if something like that was to happen though, you're real [vulnerable]. I didn't know about Oscar having a Camper Team out there.

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- TT Yeah.
- JB Do you want me to read this out loud?
- TT Well, if you want to. Especially your part when they talk about you.
- JB [Reading from the documents] “After they entered November 7 the object came directly overhead with the sound of jet engines.” And see, I didn’t hear anything. “Staff Sergeant Bond at the Flight Security Control Center at November Flight stated the object which looked to him as if it were the sun came near the hardened antenna at November-1.” I don’t remember that.
- TT They’ve got “handred antenna,” is that just a misspelling?
- JB I think that’s supposed to be “hardened.” [Reading] “It then moved to the right and he sent the SAT out to check out what it was.”
- TT In relation to where you are in the facility can you see the hardened antenna from your windows?
- JB No, it’s kind of back like, when you look out the gate the first thing you see is the gate and we had that big—
- TT You’re looking at the entry.
- JB Yeah. The entrance and to the right of it was the garage where the vehicles were, and the antenna would’ve been back, well, back in this direction (gesturing to his right) back in this direction if I’m facing this direction at my desk, I’m looking towards the garage and the antenna would have been back in this direction (gesturing behind garage).
- TT Right. Can you see it from your position in the building?
- JB No, you’d have to get up.
- TT So you’d have to be outside to look at it.
- JB Yeah. I don’t remember the object coming near our hardened antenna.
- TT Yeah. Well it’s not in your AF-117 report form and Jablonski and Adams make no notice of it.
- JB It was not anywhere near November-1. I was at November-1.
- TT Yeah. If you read on, you apparently sent a SAT Team out chasing it (laughs).
- JB Ah, no if the team went anywhere they would have gone where the maintenance team was.
- TT Yeah, we know that for a fact.
- JB Yeah, but I don’t remember sending them out—
- TT The off-duty team?
- JB No I wouldn’t have—
- TT So that’s a curiosity. I don’t know where the heck it comes from. Maybe it’s another flight.

- JB I'm not sure. [Reading] "Sergeant Smith at Oscar-1 saw the object separate in two. At this time Juliet Flt and Mike Flt Team observed the same things and described it in the same way." I didn't see it split, but it's very possible it could have.
- TT In your 117 you do report two objects for a period of three minutes and "one came under the other and one disappeared."
- JB And that's when I was thinking maybe because they told me about the B-52—that that might have been what I was seeing. They were different kind of lights, [Reading] "The approximate grid coordinates—"
- TT They had the thing landing about two or three miles northeast of N-7. And that's approximately where the B-52 overflew the object on the ground, so everything occurred just a couple of miles from N-7, you know, and the maintenance guys they saw it off the road as they were driving down, to the east, and the thing paced them to the south, as they were moving, and a lot of their sightings were in that area, between them and the base.
- JB I remember the combat crew said something about the maintenance team was getting a little flaky out there and they might need some, some help from security, because they were getting a little scared. My crew asked me if I saw anything. At the time I didn't because I wasn't looking out in that way, and I had lights on inside and it was fairly light with a lot of reflection in the windows. So, that's when I went and turned off the lights inside to go look.
- TT So yeah, I don't know where that information comes from and it was a co-incidental document, you follow what I'm saying?
- JB It might have been at another site that they were talking about. I remember going into the base after we got back and going into this room and somebody telling us they were so-and-so, and giving us this big pack of material, "whatever you can remember—take your time with it." He didn't say, "feel free to talk among yourselves if you remember something, or if you need to remember something"...he didn't say that. And I don't remember the cook ever being interviewed either, or if the facility manager if he was there.
- TT Were out there for a week during that period?
- JB Yep.
- TT So you came in maybe a few days later, or do you recall when?
- JB No. It very well could have been the next day; it could have been a day later.
- TT When you came back in that's when you think you filled that report out?
- JB Yeah, exactly, when we got back in we stored our equipment, checked our weapons in and we had to go clean the bus—that was a must. "Better clean that vehicle before you bring it back in here."
- TT The mud and so forth off it?
- JB Yeah, see, the guys going out, they'd always muddy it up and we got stuck with taking it back and cleaning it up. It would have been just my team and well the 6 of us.
- TT Yeah but the only people who filled out the forms were Jabonski, Adams and you, so they never did bother to talk to the off-duty. But they didn't interview you or debrief you; they just had you fill the report out?

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- JB Basically yeah.
- TT And was that the last you ever heard about it?
- JB Yeah.
- TT You never asked about it?
- JB No, we didn't talk about it. Well, the way we worked, we worked so much classified stuff you know.
- TT Nobody had to tell you how to conduct yourself.
- JB No. Well, and another thing, the B-52 radarscope—there's no way a star would have been like that.
- TT They're saying it was a ball of plasma. See here, they note "near hard antenna."
- JB No. And, in fact, if it had been that close to my LCF my Combat Crew would have been going bananas.
- TT Oh, I can imagine if it had come inside your security fence (laughs).
- JB Yeah, yeah.
- TT No, all hell would've broke loose I would have thought.
- JB Yeah.
- TT The camper team was out here at O-6. The break in was apparently here at O-7. So the maintenance guys, when they were through with what they were doing at N-7, they drove back, and they said as they drove by O-7 on their way back out to Hwy 83, they saw the security lights on, and he claims he not only saw the security lights, he saw that hatch open and the Strike Team was just entering the facility. He said he would have stopped if he hadn't seen the Strike Team but instead he drove by. So obviously they turned the lights on, sent the Strike Team down.
- JB Unless they turned them on when they went in. They could have—
- TT They could turn them on from the capsule couldn't they?
- JB They could have gone onto the site opened the hatch and then came back out to the gate.
- TT True they might not have been seeing that correctly.
- JB Because we were told they didn't want us, unless we were camper team that was going to be there, they didn't want our vehicles inside that fence.
- TT Ah, so you left them parked out on the drive.
- JB Yeah, we'd usually park out on the drive. About the only time you would see a vehicle inside, if you had a missile support vehicle, lot of times they'd do a complete change out and they would haul missile pieces out to it.
- TT Did you ever sweep the grounds to get rid of tracks and tire tracks and so forth as a means of security?
- JB No. [Looking at map]. The only thing I can't figure, whoever it was in that report, they were talking about this—

- TT Hardened antenna.
- JB Yeah. Where I'm looking straight towards the object, whatever it was. My garage would have been over here, it wasn't anywhere near the antenna, didn't come near my site, my LCF. Just didn't happen.
- TT Do you recall how the object disappeared what direction it was when you last sighted it?
- JB I'd say basically in the same area, but it just kinda, it was just there and then it was gone.
- TT You were reporting it right up until 5:18 in the morning, so you first saw it at 3:08, so you guys were watching it—
- JB A little over two hours. And I basically was in pretty much constant communications with my capsule crew too, letting them know what was going on. And they were interested, real interested. Someone somewhere would be able to tell you who that crew was. They'd spend 24 hours out and then they'd fly them back. They might not come out again for another 2-3 days.
- TT The last sighting that all you guys reported was this thing real low on the horizon, and a green color, does that ring any bell?
- JB Kind of a glow, yeah. And that might have something to do with the cold weather—it was cold but it was clear.
- TT But do you remember that green color?
- JB Vaguely kind of like an outer glow maybe.
- TT Other colors you observed or just white light?
- JB None that I can think of and then the only red I can think of was probably coming from the B-52's itself, the red marker lights. And when they [Jablonski and Adams] got back to the LCF, we didn't talk about it that much because everybody had already been talked out.
- TT Were those guys real excited or worked up about it?
- JB Mild excitement.
- TT Yeah.
- JB In fact, I think when they came back in, they got out of the vehicle and secured it, came in, I don't even think they got anything to eat. I think they sat and read, watched the tube or whatever. They were awful quiet.
- TT Well thanks for taking the time, appreciate it—
- JB Well you are welcome.
- [transcription end]

¹ Sewart AFB, Smyrna, Tenn. establishment of the Army/ Air Base in 1941. This military installation was located adjacent to the Sam Davis Home plantation and was a B-24 advanced training facility. The Base was later renamed Sewart Air Force Base in honor of Major Alan Sewart. During the 50's and 60's the military personnel and dependents stationed at the facility exceeded 10,000 persons. The Smyrna facility was one of those bases

scheduled to close by 1970. The closure of the 2,400-acre Air Force Base resulted in a severe economic blow to the community.



² Thiokol TrackMaster, This is probably similar to what Mr. Bond describes:

