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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND

1 May 1997

56 CS/SCBR
7023 N Jerstad Lane
Luke AFB AZ 85309-1661

Mr. John Greenewald, Jr.
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Greenewald

This is in reply to your 3 April 1996 Freedom of Information Act request, received on 17 April 1997. Our search reviewed no records exist pertaining to your request.

The mission of the 56th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base (AFB) is to train F-16 fighter pilots. We are not an air defense base which maintains aircraft on "scramble" status. Instead, our pilots are instructors and trainees learning to fly the F-16 and employ it in the ground attack and aerial combat missions. While we routinely have aircraft airborne at night, their mission is not to investigate unusual aerial sightings, nor would they be asked to do so. On the night of 13 Mar 97, our aircraft were involved in normal training missions and had no involvement whatsoever with the lights observed over Phoenix.

On the evening of 13 Mar 97, our command post and other base agencies received telephone calls about the lights that many saw in the sky over Arizona. In the days that followed, our public affairs office also handled calls about the same subject. When queried by the staff of the Strange Universe television program, our public affairs people acknowledged that callers reported seeing lights in the sky, but our staff did not state that the cause was aerial flares. In fact, we don't know where the question of aerial flares come from. There have been a number of accounts of the 13 Mar 97 incident that alleged Air Force involvement, and we have made every effort to ensure that callers understood that we were not involved in that incident. However, despite our best efforts to the contrary, we have been accused of withholding or covering up

information. This is not the case--in fact, we have honestly answered every query made about the 13 Mar 97 incident.

In summary, we have no records to give you, and we assure you that Luke AFB aircraft were not involved in any way with the phenomena reported on the the night of 13 Mar 97. If you interpret this "no records" response as an adverse action, you may appeal it to the Secretary of the Air Force within 60 calendar days from the date of this letter. Include in the appeal your reasons for reconsideration, and attach a copy of this letter. Address your letter to the SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, THRU: 56TH COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON/SCBR, 7023 N JERSTAD LANE, LUKE AFB AZ 85309-1661.

Any questions can be directed to Ms. Pat Donovan at 602-856-6572.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nel M. Flagler".

NEL M. FLAGLER
Chief, Records Management
Information Systems Flight