

1985: Silobela, Zimbabwe

July 22, unspecified hour but round sunset

Source: The Times dated August 3, 1985



The village of Silobela, in Zimbabwe

Back in 1985, a round object topped with a cone was seen by dozens of people over the skies of Zimbabwe. With pilots, air traffic controllers, and civilians among the witnesses; and the whole country turned to aeronautical experts for an explanation. Now, a year and a half later, Zimbabwe's Air Commodore David Thorne sees no explanation in sight. "We have not been able to identify the object," he says. "We have had to classify it as a UFO."

Although he didn't personally witness the object, Thorne reports that "the craft was spotted as it streaked over southern Zimbabwe. Then air traffic controllers watched it hover and tracked it on radar. Two Air Force jets went after the object, and the pilots described it as incredibly shiny, reflecting the colors of the sunset. Our estimates indicate that the UFO was traveling at twice the speed of sound. And when it got dark outside, we realized the object was emitting its own light. Our pilots are completely reliable," Thorne contends. "This cannot

be dismissed as a plane, weather balloon, or natural phenomenon.”

But UFO skeptic James Oberg has his doubts. “The evidence value of unresearchable sightings in Zimbabwe is zero, however sincere the witnesses,” he says. “Besides, pilots are not always calm, dispassionate observers. They tend to perceive any visual stimulus in its most dangerous possible configuration — as another craft. That’s a good characteristic of a safe pilot, but not a good characteristic of a UFO witness.” Oberg also points out that “Zimbabwe is sort of on the edge of the civilized world in terms of tracking things that might cause this kind of UFO report — like Russian and South African reconnaissance planes that, I’m sure, are flying over that airspace.”

Notes: the site of the sighting was near Silobela (not far from the actual commercial Center).

According to Air Marshall Azim Daudpota “This was no ordinary UFO, Scores of people saw it. It was no illusion, no deception, no imagination.”

Reliability evaluation:

- very high -

**something really seen by witnesses; incomplete details;
possible military craft**

