



## April 1986: After Chernobyl Melt Down, What Flew Over Mannheim, Germany?

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On April 26, 1986 when the Chernobyl, Russia nuclear reactor melted down, radioactivity spread all over Europe. Mannheim, Germany housed about 60,000 American military at the time, including a National Security Agency unit that passed out all the secret military codes. Not far away were the huge American Ramstein AFB in Kaiserslautern and Rhein-main AFB in Frankfurt.

Earthfiles, news category.

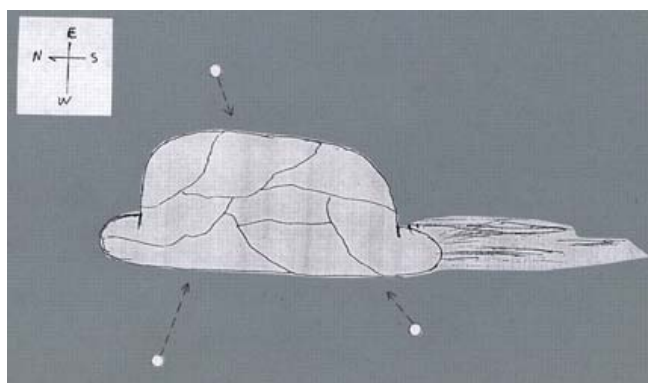
**April 21, 2001 El Paso, Texas** - Sergio Arellano was born in El Paso fifty years ago, graduated from high school there and then joined the U. S. Army where he earned a degree in transportation. By the end of April 1986 - and after the awful nuclear melt down at a Chernobyl, Russia power plant on April 26, 1986 - Sergio was a Master Sergeant in Mannheim, Germany working in the 28th Transportation Battalion. In 1996, he retired from the Army and returned to his hometown to work for a commercial trucking company.

As we near the 15th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor melt down, Sergio remembers how the Mannheim base was put on restrictions to lessen exposure to dangerous radioactivity spreading over Europe. No physical exercise outdoors. Stay away from the contaminated Rhine River. Cut down vehicle activity to reduce radioactive dust in the air. Don't eat or drink food and water off the base. Eat only American canned foods or in the base commissary. Don't buy local produce. Keep pets indoors.

Sergio particularly remembers one of those early mornings around 7 a.m. when he had reported for duty without the normal 6 a.m. run. He was at the Truck Master's Dispatch Office in the Motor Pool that overlooked downtown Mannheim. The sun was shining and the sky was blue. Some 30 soldiers were outside the office waiting for their orders from Sergio and half a dozen of his colleagues inside the office. Suddenly people began yelling and pointing at the sky.

## Interview:

**Sergio Arellano, Retired Master Sergeant (1996), U. S. Army, El Paso, Texas:** "What we saw was a big old ship of some type, an aircraft. Well, it didn't really resemble an aircraft. It looked like one of those old German helmets. It had the shape of a German helmet or modern Army helmet. And it was flying pretty low, maybe between 5,000 and 6,000 feet. And it was going maybe at 100 knots, based on the fact that we parachute a lot and that's about the height that a helicopter flies when we parachute out of it. And it was going not too fast. The colors were sort of yellow. It had some green on it, dull green. Blue. And it looked like a liquid and a solid material at the same time. And it didn't seem solid. It looked more liquid like mercury, like when you grab a piece of mercury and move it in your hand and you stab it with little things. It just looked liquidy and solid at the same time. It had a streamer on the back that it would get bigger and smaller, but it was a constant stream.



Helmet-shaped aerial craft traveling silently south to north over Mannheim, Germany U. S. Army

Spanelli Barracks at 7 a.m. on a morning in late April 1986. Sergio estimated the size to be five stories high,

150 feet wide and somewhere between 300 to 500 feet long. The craft moved slowly in jerky motions trailing material

behind that had the same dull, mustard-yellow and blue-green mixed with light brown and aqua turquoise colors.

Sergio thought the craft's appearance seemed almost like liquid, or like the soft metal mercury. Three small, white objects

flew at high speed from three different directions and merged with the craft at the same time.

Drawing © 2001 by Sergio Arellano.

### DID IT HAVE A COLOR?

It was the same color as the object which was the same color and it would get long, get smaller and go out. And the craft seemed like it was hesitating, like stalling. It was not an even, fluid flight. It was like moving sort of slow like when you let a clutch out too quick on a car and it sort of jerks forward.

### HOW BIG DO YOU THINK THIS WAS?

Well, based on what we all decided it was, it was about the average size of one of our barracks. Our barracks were five stories high and maybe about 300 to 500 feet long.

### THIS WAS PRETTY BIG.

It was a big thing and the sun was hitting it. We had a clear view and besides us, on the battalion parade field, the battalion was having a formation. So maybe 90% of the battalion was present.

### HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD THAT BE?

That would be maybe 1500 men and women.

**IF YOU ADD THOSE 1500 AND ABOUT 100 OF YOU UP WHERE YOU WERE, YOU'RE GETTING UP TO ABOUT 1600 PEOPLE IN THAT**

**ONE AREA WHO WOULD HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO SEE THIS OBJECT?**

Oh, yes, because immediately after that formation and when everybody gathered together, that was the topic of conversation in the dining facility and everywhere else. We all saw it.

**WHAT DID YOUR SUPERIORS SAY THAT THEY THOUGHT THIS OBJECT SHAPED LIKE A MILITARY HELMET THAT SEEMED TO BE BOTH LIQUID AND SOLID WITH THESE ODD COLORS OF GREENS AND SO FORTH, 5 STORIES HIGH, COUPLE OF HUNDRED FEET LONG, WHAT DID THEY SAY IT WAS?**

Well, nobody seemed to know. Everyone was saying it was a UFO because no one knew what it was. I mean, it was just shocking that it would fly right over our military area. And our military area in Germany there, we had 5 or 6 big barracks which is one of the largest concentrations of soldiers in Germany. Some of it is a No Fly Area. We contacted the Intelligent Section of our battalion to let them know to report a craft flying over us to see if anyone knew what it was because it was not supposed to be flying on top of us.

**WHAT WAS THEIR RESPONSE?**

By 6 o'clock that evening, the official report was that there was no such craft but was maybe space debris that had come down and fell on earth.

**ARE YOU SAYING THAT BY EVENING FROM THE MORNING THAT THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION FROM THE MILITARY WAS THAT THIS WAS SOME KIND OF SPACE DEBRIS?**

That's exactly what they reported. They also reported on the Stars and Stripes the following day. But earlier at noon, they had reported it was a UFO and that it came in from The Netherlands towards Germany and that they had sent interceptors from The Netherlands. Now, we sit between two air bases, one in Frankfurt and one in Kaiserslautern, and both are like the biggest air bases in Europe: Ramstein AFB and Rhein-main AFB. So it was shocking to us that we didn't see aircraft chasing it. It took a long time. We observed it for maybe 10 or 15 minutes. It took a long time to pass over us and go over Mannheim and kept on going.

**SOMETHING THAT WAS THAT BIG AND WOULD TAKE 10 TO 15 MINUTES THAT YOU WOULD ALL WATCH, 1600 OF YOU, THAT'S NOT SPACE DEBRIS, IS IT?**

No. Space debris. We as military personnel have seen a lot of shooting stars and meteorites that travel because most of our training was at night.

**THEY TRAVEL FAST.**

Sure! We see a lot of it and a lot in the early dawn. Those things are fast and have a lot of light. This was dark in color. As it was going over us, there were three little white lights of some type, but they weren't like bright lights. They were just dull white objects. All three came from different directions and they sort of merged into this thing and went right into it without any doors opening or anything, just like they came in and swooped right into it and that was something we all discussed and we all saw it. When we saw those things coming at it, we all said, 'What the heck was that?' It just went right in it.

**TELL ME MORE ABOUT THOSE WHITE OBJECTS.**

They looked like little baseballs. They were white. I want to say they were glowing, white lights, they were just white like very clean baseballs. And one came in from the east and they all came in more or less at the same time. And one came in from the southwest and the other came out of the north towards the south. And they all sort of merged into this thing. They went right into it and became one with the big ship there.

**DID THEY ALL SEEM TO MERGE AT THE SAME PLACE?**

No, they came in at different places. They came in at three separate angles, or at three separate directions and they all went right into it. They didn't slow down or nothing. They were coming in at a pretty fast rate of speed and went right into it. We all saw it. At first we thought maybe something was shooting at this thing

because of all the military bases. So, we said, 'It looks like someone shot at this thing.' But no, it was no shot. These things came in and went right into it. The craft didn't stop. It didn't slow down. It just like swallowed these things up and kept on going.

**DID ANY OF YOUR SUPERIOR OFFICERS TALK WITH ANY OF YOU OFF THE RECORD ABOUT HAVING ANY OTHER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT WHAT THIS UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT MIGHT BE AND WAS THE TERM EXTRATERRESTRIAL EVER USED?**

We were all sure because the Commander also witnessed it we were sure it was something we had never seen and it was a craft of some kind, or object of some type, being self-propelled. But no, nobody asked nobody. No one ever mentioned it. And the word was, that was that and it was the end of the story.

**MEANING THAT IT WAS JUST 'SPACE DEBRIS?'**

Yes, that it was space debris and that was the end of the story. After that, no one mentioned it because being in the military, if you keep on harping on something, all of a sudden doors start closing on you.

**SO YOU KNEW, ALL OF YOU AND THAT'S A LOT OF GUYS - AT LEAST 1500 TO 1600 RIGHT THERE AT MANNHEIM - THAT THIS WAS SOME KIND OF A COVER UP, RIGHT?**

Well, we knew exactly that was it. And we talked about it all that night because everyone sort of hangs around. There's only one bowling alley, one NCO club, one PX, one commissary. So everybody was talking about it and how silly they were by saying it was space debris when in fact we all saw it."

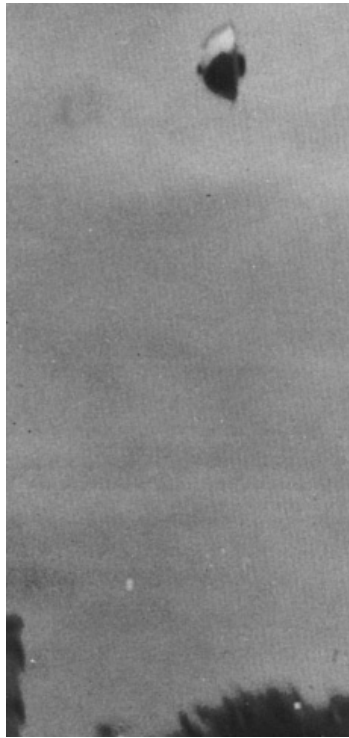
**SEEKING MORE EYEWITNESSES**

If anyone reading this report from Sergio Arellano was also in Mannheim the end of April 1986 and who might be able to add their own eyewitness accounts, please contact me at [Earthfiles@earthfiles.com](mailto:Earthfiles@earthfiles.com).

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**More Information:**

Another unidentified aerial craft of a similar shape but not as big - and seemingly tipped vertically on a side compared to Sergio Arellano's horizontal "helmet" - was photographed on April 2, 1966 above the Melbourne, Australia suburb of Balwyn. The polaroid photograph below was taken a few minutes after 2 p.m. by a businessman from his garden. The Victorian Flying Saucer Research Society (VFSRS) of Moorabbin, Australia carefully studied the photograph and environment and concluded the photo showed "no sign of multiple exposure, montage or any other tampering."



April 2, 1966, Balwyn suburb of Melbourne, Australia.  
Polaroid photograph taken by businessman from his garden a few minutes after 2 p.m.  
Source: Page 138, *UFOS: A Pictorial History from Antiquity to the Present*  
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