correspondence

Lenticular Clouds

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In the July 1978 BULLETIN (p. 814), Martner presented photographs of lenticular clouds over Mt. McKinley National Park during August 1977. I enjoyed the similarity of these cloud formations to those over striking topography from the other end of the Americas.

The photos reproduced here (Figs. 1–4) were taken during two weeks of the Southern Hemisphere summer, 17–31 December 1977, in Torres del Paine National Park, Chile (51°S). The park is at the southern reaches of a 100 km long ice sheet. Lenticular clouds were often observed above and downwind of the 3050 m peak Paine Grande. Similar wave clouds were also seen

0003-0007/80/030212-02$04.50

FIG. 1. Lenticular clouds east of Paine Grande (downwind), Torres del Paine National Park, Magallanes, Chile, December 1977.

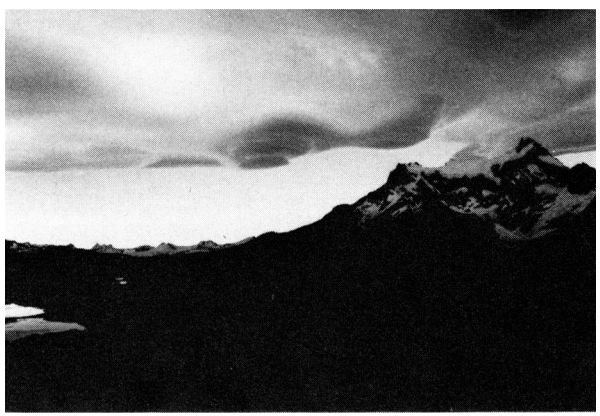

FIG. 2. Lenticular clouds above Paine Grande—elevation 3050 m, view to the west. Torres del Paine National Park, Magallanes, Chile, December 1977.

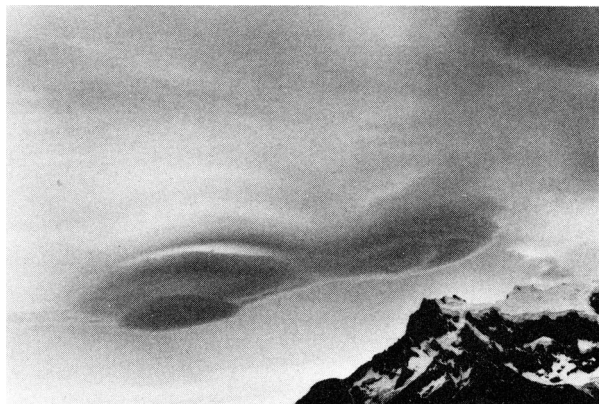

FIG. 3. A closer view of the lenticular clouds shown in Fig. 2.

FIG. 4. Lenticular clouds above Lago Toro, view to the southwest. Background: mountains of Monte Balmaceda National Park, Magallanes, Chile, December 1977.

downwind of the neighboring massif Monte Balmaceda.

Fifteen kilometers downwind of Paine Grande, surface winds (approximately 300 m elevation) were predominantly westerly and were measured during two intense events (20 and 27 December) to be 10 and 16 m/s, respectively (measured with a propeller-type anemometer, hand-held at 2 m).

My stay in Torres del Paine National Park was under the auspices of Earthwatch, Belmont, Mass.; and William L. Franklin, Iowa State University, Ames. ●