

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL ...  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



# TIG brief



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## **Operations & Training; UFOs Serious Business**

Unidentified flying objects - sometimes treated lightly by the press and referred to as "flying saucers" - must be rapidly and accurately identified as serious USAF business in the ZI As AFR 200-2 points out, the Air Force concern with these sightings is threefold: First of all, is the object a threat to the defense of the U.S.? Secondly, does it contribute to technical or scientific knowledge? And then there's the inherent USAF responsibility to explain to the American people through public-information media what is going on in their skies.

The phenomena or actual objects comprising UFO's will tend to increase, with the public more aware of goings on in space but still inclined to some apprehension. Technical and defense considerations will continue to exist in this era.

Published about three months ago, AFR 200-2 outlines necessary orderly, qualified reporting as well as public-information procedures. This is where the base should stand today, with practices judged at least satisfactory by commander and inspector:

- Responsibility for handling UFO's should rest with either intelligence, operations, the Provost Marshal or the Information Officer - in that order of preference, dictated by limits of the base organization;
- A specific officer should be designated as responsible;
- He should have experience in investigative techniques and also, if possible, scientific or technical background;
- He should have authority to obtain the assistance of specialists on the base;
- He should be equipped with binoculars, camera, Geiger counter, magnifying glass and have a source for containers in which to store samples.

What is required is that every UFO sighting be investigated and reported to the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson AFB and that explanation to the public be realistic and knowledgeable. Normally that explanation will be made only by the OSAF Information Office. It all adds up to part of the job of being experts in our own domain.

**TAKING NO CHANCES**

For some time now the USAF has investigated all reports of unidentified flying objects (UFOs), under provisions of AFR 200-2. This has been done to leave no stones unturned in identifying objects which may pose a threat to the security of the United States and its armed forces.

Even though to date there has been no evidence that UFOs represent technological developments beyond the range of our present day scientific knowledge, we continue to be on the alert and examine reports submitted under the regulation. However, time and effort could be saved if individuals who make the sightings and submit reports understood that often reported UFOs are finally identified as jet aircraft, missiles, balloons, searchlights, birds, kites, anti-collision beacons, jet engine exhaust, condensation trails, known meteorological phenomena, etc. The fact that there are many manmade objects (satellites) now in orbit, may add to the items suspected of being extraterrestrial vehicles or foreign weapons threatening the security of this country.

A more careful scrutiny of sightings, which are potential objects of reports, is therefore obvious. Only objects which the observer is sure do not conform to known aircraft, missiles, or other above-mentioned items should therefore be reported.

### **REPORTING UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS**

Unidentified flying objects (UFOs) are defined in AFR 200-2 as any aerial phenomena, airborne objects which are unknown or appear out of the ordinary to the observer because of performance, aerodynamic characteristics, or unusual features. Activities initially receiving reports of aerial objects and phenomena must screen the information to determine whether a valid UFO is involved. If determined that it is an object such as a balloon, searchlight, astronomical body, missile, satellite in orbit, or aircraft - even though the type, purpose, origin and destination is unknown - it should not be reported as a UFO.

Flying objects reported in the past have posed no threat to the security of the U.S. However, observations aid AF readiness - and since the possibility exists that a UFO reported may be hostile, or a new foreign air vehicle of unconventional design, it is imperative to report sightings rapidly, factually, and as completely as possible.

The AF continues to analyze all reports of UFOs until they are scientifically or technically explained - however, some remain unidentified because report of sightings was not immediate, detailed, or objective. Because of the human factors involved, such as personal impressions and interpretations, a careful study must be made of the logic, consistency, and coherence of the observer's report. Particular attention should be given to the observer's age, occupation, education, and whether his vocation involves observation reporting or technical knowledge. Every effort should be made to resolve the sighting immediately, since the officer who receives the report initially is in a much better position to conduct an "on-the-spot" survey or follow-up than subsequent investigative personnel.

A recent change to AFR 200-2 eliminates the use of AF Form 112, "Intelligence Report," when submitting written reports of sightings over 3 days old. Such reports will now be sent by letter direct to AFSC, Foreign Technology Division (FTD), Wright-Patterson AFB, where a final report will be prepared on each sighting after collection and analysis of data. There is no change in the requirement that reports under 3 days from date of sighting be reported by electrical transmission.

Commanders should insure that their training programs for crew members, pilots and other personnel include current information on the UFO Program in addition to the requirements of AFR 55-

88 for timely and accurate CIRVIS reporting. Queries from the public or private organizations on the UFO program should be referred to the Office of Information, OSAF, Washington, D. C.

### **UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS (UFOs)**

Base commanders, and their information and operations personnel, should review AFR 80-17, 19 September 1966, to assure familiarity with their responsibilities in the event they receive an inquiry concerning UFOs, or a notice of sighting. Air Force interest in UFOs is two-fold: to determine if the UFO is a possible threat to the United States and to use the scientific or technical data gained from study of UFO reports. To attain these objectives, it is necessary to explain or identify the factor that caused the observation to be reported as an unidentified flying object – i.e., any aerial phenomenon or object which is unknown or appears out of the ordinary to the observer.

Successful identification of UFOs requires prompt, accurate reporting and rapid evaluation of data. Any AF base which receives notice of a sighting in its vicinity must be ready to conduct an immediate investigation. Personnel who may receive the initial call, whether in operations or other base organizations, should be familiar with the local procedures established for carrying out the base's responsibilities to screen, evaluate and report the information. Selection of the individual to serve as UFO investigating officer is a key item in implementing these responsibilities. The commander should consider carefully the scientific and technical backgrounds and previous investigating experience of all available personnel, base his choice on qualifications for gathering and evaluating the data required by AFR 80-17. Prompt on-the-spot surveys and follow-ups by the base investigator are vital for complete case information. His report must be immediate, detailed, accurate, and objective. He must make every effort to obtain pertinent data, test all leads, clues, and hypotheses, so that he will have the best possible basis for his analysis and comments in the concluding paragraph of the report.

All personnel who may have contact with the public concerning UFO matters should be made aware of the importance of proper responses, particularly in connection with sightings which are difficult to identify. They must not only comply with the instructions in AFR 80-17 for referral of inquiries to the office which is qualified to handle them, but must refrain from any action or comment which could cause misunderstanding, either as to the UFO program or a particular case.

The number of UFO sightings reported to the Air Force during FY 1966 was the largest of any year to date, surpassing the previous record number received in 1954. This statistic constitutes another reason why all bases should assure they have the necessary investigative capability and procedural instructions for responding to UFO notices and inquiries. (Briefing of AFR 80-17 is on page 15.)