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HEADQUARTERS
ALASKAN AIR COMMAND
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Aleutian Islands

22 April 1948

AAOIN-3 312

KK-19807

SUBJECT: Unusual Sightings Along Aleutian Chain

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TO : Director of Intelligence
United States Air Forces
National Defense Building
Washington 25, D. C.

1. Beginning 8 March 1948 numerous sightings have been made in waters surrounding the Aleutian Islands by aircraft of this Command. The following report is a summary of all the unusual sightings made to this date.

1st Sighting - 8 March 1948

During a routine flight from Davis Air Force Base to Shemya Air Force Base at 090050Z, the pilots of aircraft AF5889 observed a black superstructure protruding the surface of the ocean at 177° 40' E; 51° 57' N. The pilots recognized the object as a submarine and immediately headed in its direction at an altitude of 500 feet above sea level. When approximately eight miles from the sighted object and after 5 minutes of continuous observation, the object submerged on a 120° heading, creating a large area of foam and leaving a wake which appeared to be three times the length of the sighted object. A thorough visual search was made in the area where the object submerged with negative results. It was reported by the pilot that the object submerged simultaneously when he was attempting to make voice contact with Shemya radio on 4220 Kcs.

The weather at the time of the observation was as follows: Visual contact condition 20 miles visibility, choppy sea with occasional whitecaps, surface winds 12 to 15 knots.

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2nd Sighting - 10 March 1948

While on a local training flight from Davis Air Force Base at 1945Z, the pilots of aircraft AF6368 observed a blue-white flare ascend from the south tip of Tanaga Peninsula ($177^{\circ} 55' W$; $51^{\circ} 35' N$) to a height of 7000 feet, dropping off sharply and falling to the ground in a deep orange color. The observation was made 18 miles away at 7000 feet. The duration of the observed light was approximately five seconds.

3rd Sighting - 10 March 1948

While on a routine flight to Cape Air Force Base, Umnak Island, Alaska, the pilots of aircraft AF2537 observed from 5 miles distance and 3000 feet a white vessel at $167^{\circ} 50' W$; $53^{\circ} 27' N$ proceeding outbound from the shore of Umnak Island on a course of 30° . No curiosity arose upon the sighting of the vessel, except that it appeared to be proceeding exceptionally fast with a long narrow wake trailing behind. (Interest was taken on the above report for the following reason: The shape of the vessel as described by the pilot was identical to the description as submitted by the pilots of #1 sighting, who sighted an object which resembled a submarine.)

Weather at the time of observation was ceiling and visibility unlimited.

4th Sighting - 13 March 1948

While on a routine cargo flight, the pilots of an aircraft of this Command sighted from 8000 feet and between breaks in a broken cloud layer, two black objects on the surface of the water ($55^{\circ} 58' N$; $160^{\circ} 50' W$ and $55^{\circ} 56' N$; $160^{\circ} 54' W$) which to them appeared to have the shape of a submarine conning tower.

5th Sighting - 2 April 1948

Surface radar contact was made by a Navy patrol aircraft operating from Kodiak, Alaska, while at 1000 feet altitude, in position $53^{\circ} 03' N$; $170^{\circ} 35' W$ at 0115Z.

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Target was under radar observation while aircraft proceeded from 19 miles to 4 miles of target where it disappeared from scope. A thorough visual and radar search was made with negative results.

The weather at the time of observation was: Visibility 15 miles, southeast wind at 18 mph.

6th Sighting - 3 April 1948

The Commanding Officer of Naval vessel ATAL92 reported a surface radar contact at 0305Z while in position 53° 05' N; 171° 10' W. True bearing of target was 330° at 13 miles distance. Target bearing remained constant for 25 minutes and the distance decreased to 11 miles, then disappearing from scope at 0330Z.

The weather at the time of observation was: Visibility five to eight miles, 10 foot seas.

7th Sighting - 7 April 1948

On a scheduled flight from Fort Glenn to Adak, Alaska, the pilot sighted from 5000 feet at 072254Z an unidentified surface object in the vicinity of the Koniuj Islands. (52° 14' N; 175° 05' W). Object appeared to be a small vessel proceeding on a heading of 120°. Upon closer inspection, object appeared to be submerging and trailing a narrow wake.

8th Sighting - 10 April 1948

Ground Control Approach radar operator at Shemya Air Force Base, Shemya, Alaska made a positive radar contact from 0750Z to 0812Z and 0907Z to 0920Z. The range and azimuth of the target was 8½ miles at 172 degrees. The known altitude coverage of radar at above range was 1000 to 4000 feet and the bearing was 95° magnetic. The approximate speed of the target was 14 to 16 knots.

The weather at the time of the observation was: Ground fog.

2. The following operational action was taken as a result of the above sightings.

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1st Sighting

Three Navy Privateers dispatched from Adak, Alaska to search area at dawn on 9 March 1948.

Results: Negative.

4th Sighting

Navy reconnaissance conducted on 16 March 1948. Results indicated one large greyish-brown building 55° 56' N; 161° 19' W. Building had two adjacent derrick-like structures about 50 feet high.

Pilot who made No. 4 sighting made reconnaissance of area in which he sighted objects on 19 March 1948. Area which pilot searched and reported seeing objects did not correspond with area which the Navy reported on above. Pilot claims that objects he reported were not there when he conducted search on 19 March 1948.

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Sightings

Field orders were issued to the 72nd Photo Reconnaissance Squadron (VLR) and long range reconnaissance was conducted on 17 March 1948, with the following results: No positive targets sighted. Visual search made in area No. 1 and No. 4 sightings. Radar search in area of No. 3 sighting. No. 1 sighting area not completely covered due to lack of fuel and strong winds aloft. Three partially sunk Japanese vessels sighted in Kiska Harbor and one in Gertrude Cove, Kiska Island.

Reconnaissance scheduled for 18 March 1948 was cancelled due to deep snow on Ladd Field runways.

5th Sighting

Visual and radar search made immediately by same aircraft which made sighting.

Results: Negative.

5th and 6th Sightings

Detailed reconnaissance conducted by Navy Privateer from NOB Kodiak on 4 April 1948 between 169° W. - 174° W. Aircraft

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equipped with Sono Buoys.

Results: Negative.

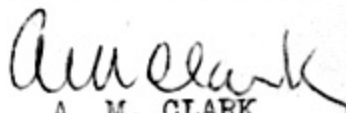
7th Sighting

Navy PB4Y aircraft proceeding on same course as reporting aircraft, and twelve minutes flight time to the East, intercepted message and requested reporting aircraft to indicate last observed position of surface craft. Navy PB4Y prepared Sono Buoy pattern and detected sounds similar to that made by under-seas craft. Two or three whales were observed surfacing and submerging within the Sono-Buoy pattern. Listening device operator was able to differentiate between sounds attributed to the whales and that of the machinery-like turn. PB4Y remained in general vicinity for approximately one hour.

8th Sighting

No action taken.

3. In order that objects sighted as those described above can be more positively identified, it is now a standard operating procedure with all scheduled aircraft flying the Aleutian chain to carry one pair of binoculars and one loaded K-20 camera. Instructions have been given to aircrews to utilize the binoculars for search and to get photos of all unidentified objects sighted with the K-20 camera.



A. M. CLARK
Lt. Colonel, USAF
Director of Intelligence

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