

(SECRET)

UNCLASSIFIED 17 August 1953

SUBJECT: Report on Trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota; Rapid City, South Dakota; and Denver, Colorado

FACTS AND DISCUSSION:

1. Capt E. J. Ruppelt departed Dayton on 10 August 1953 for Rapid City AFB, South Dakota, to investigate a report of an unidentified flying object. A stop over was made at Minneapolis to check flights of Navy balloons.

2. Mr. Kieth (Telephone Main 8158, Ext. 7052) was contacted at the ONR, Navy Balloon Project, Physics Department, University of Minnesota. Balloon tracks from all Navy projects for 5 and 6 August 1953 were checked. No balloons were in the Rapid City, S. D., or Bismarck, N. D., area. A flight was launched at 1200 CST on 5 August but the load released and the balloon bag was lost shortly after launch. It was considered impossible that this balloon could have gone clear to Rapid City or Bismarck, however. Mr. Kieth also reported that CAA in Grand Island, Nebraska, found a downed balloon on 6 August. It was not a Navy balloon, and they had no track on it.

3. On 11 August, Capt John Bristol, Operations Officer of the 740th AC&W Squadron at Ellsworth AFB was contacted (Telephone 4940, Ext. 8254). Approximately two hours were spent reviewing the incident.

4. W/O Bennett, Controller on duty at the time of the incident was interviewed. His account of the incident was almost identical to that given in the initial TWX. He was on duty at 2005 MST when a Mrs. Phyllis Killian, a GOC post observer, called in an unidentified flying object northeast of her post at Blackhawk, S. D. (Note: Sunset 1920 MST - twilight 33 min.) She reported through the Rapid City Filter Center. She reported that the object was stationary, then moved south toward Rapid City. When W/O Bennett got the report that the reported object, or light, was heading toward Rapid City, he sent three airmen from the radar site to look for it. They reported a light moving from generally north to south at a high rate of speed. (See paragraph for details on their observation) At this same time, W/O Bennett observed two "blips" going south on the scope. He could not get a decent track because of ground clutter in the area. In a few minutes the GOC post in Blackhawk (Mrs. Killian) called in that the light was back in nearly its original position. An airborne F-84 was vectored into the area and after a search made visual contact. The F-84 was being vectored into a "blip" that was remaining stationary about 15 miles NE of Blackhawk. Bennett said he believed the F-84 pilot saw target that was on the scope. Shortly after the Tally Ho by the pilot the target started to move on a heading of about 320° mag. Four "good" (Benett's description) "blips" were obtained. Photos of this track were taken but the camera malfunctioned and the photos were no good. The last "blip" occurred at 70 miles and at this point the aircraft was returned to base. (This does not exactly correlate with the pilot's report in paragraph .)

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10

UNCLASSIFIED
(SECRET)

both the radar blip of both the object and the aircraft were being carried and the pilot was talking to the controller on UHF. As the pilot turned into the light on his initial sighting he turned on his radar gunsight. As he swung onto the target the warning light came on. No range was obtained since the sight starts to measure at about 4,000 yards. All this might indicate was that something was beyond 4,000 yards. The light remained on until the chase was broken off. After the chase, on the way home, the light blinked on and off several times indicating a possible malfunction. The sight was not checked by maintenance on return and had not been checked since. Why, I don't know.

The F-84 chased the light for about five minutes, or to about 80 miles north of the base. The light appeared to make slow changes in color and intensity. The pilot stated that the light definitely moved in relation to the stars. After the intercept was broken off the aircraft returned toward base. On the way back the pilot "saw" the F-84 and could see the light over his shoulder. He finally quit looking to find the field.

About 20 miles out of base he got a visual on a similar light that changed from red to white. He was on a heading of 180° magnetic at 12 to 14,000 ft. and the light was 10° low to the right. He thought it was a car going around curves in the hills but changed his mind when the red and white lights were of equal intensity. This target was in the ground clutter of the radar but something at 8,000 ft. was picked up on the height finder radar. The light slowly went out then came back in. It seemed to be west moving since the aircraft was kept on a constant heading and the angle of azimuth and elevation increased. The light was first observed for 30 seconds, it faded, reappeared, then faded again after 30 seconds.

As the pilot came around the west side of the air base and up (north) the east side he saw another light and turned into it to take photos. (The photos were no good.)

8. The two airmen who went outside the radar site to visually observe the object being carried on the scope were interrogated next. Two attached questionnaires cover their observations. They were taken outside the radar building and pointed out what they had seen.

9. A visit was made to the Weather Bureau Station at the Rapid City Municipal Airport to check weather and balloon launches (Note: the air base launches no balloons). The observer on duty looked up the balloon track for the balloon launched at 2000 MST on the 5th of August and it went south from the Municipal Airport. This puts it out of the area of the sighting. Data on inversions was not available as it had been forwarded to Asheville, N. C. (Note: The balloon tracks and weather for 2000 MST on 5 August should be requested from Asheville.)

10. No attempt was made to contact the GOC observers at Blackhawk. They had been interrogated by base personnel and were "all excited". It was believed Capt Ruppelt's talking to them would only further excite them, needlessly. Their statements are in the Form 112. add paragraph 5 on next page