

UFO tracked by Navy men at electronic range in Fla.

OCALA, Fla. (AP) — "I've never seen anything like it," says Timothy Collins, a Navy radar technician who tracked an unidentified object over the Florida sky. "And I don't want to see anything like it again."

Collins was among at least a dozen workers at the Navy's Pinecastle Electronic Warfare Range who said they spotted brightly lit objects.

"The computer wouldn't handle it," said Lt. Cmdr. John Sullivan, commander of the range, used by the Navy

to train its combat pilots in tactics for avoiding enemy weapons.

Robert J. Clark, of Detroit, duty officer Sunday night, said curious civilians began calling, including one man who said he and seven others on State Road 19 near Silver Glen Springs had seen an object 50 or 60 feet in diameter with flashing lights.

The naval air station at Jacksonville said no Navy planes were in the area.

"So we got out the binoculars and went up on the tower," Clark said. "We

located an object due north, approximately 1,500 feet above the trees. We watched it for 15 or 20 minutes and it looked like it was pretty stationary."

Then, he said, the object came up on Pinecastle's radar.

"We locked in on it and then all of a sudden it was gone," Clark said.

"First it was heading south and then it was heading north. All in the split of a second . . . planes just don't have a turning radius like that," Collins said.

They said a preliminary digital readout showed the object at that time to be moving at about 3 knots, meaning it was virtually motionless.

Then it moved, turning abruptly so that the computer couldn't track it, they said.

Carol Snyder said she and a dozen other base personnel went to the top of a control tower with binoculars. "We saw three very blurry lights — red, white and green," she said. "We watched them for about 30 minutes."

Descriptions under study

Navy says unusual sighting was just an object flying unidentified

By DAVIN LIGHT

Sentinel Star Staff

ASTOR — They're not calling it a UFO, but officials at the U.S. Navy Pinecastle Electronic Warfare Range in the Ocala National Forest said Wednesday they still were baffled by an "unusual" weekend sighting there and are conducting an investigation.

"We're calling it an object that was flying that was unidentified," said Nick Young, public affairs officer for Naval Air Station Jacksonville of which Pinecastle is a part.

Young said he disliked the connotation the term UFO carries and preferred not to use it.

Witnesses' descriptions of the sighting have been documented and are being studied, he said.

"The attitude of the commanding officer (Lt. Commander John Sullivan) is that the men are reliable and he believes them."

The officers involved will make a report on the sighting to the commander of the Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, at Norfolk, Va., he said.

The possibility the UFO was an airplane has been discounted, said Storekeeper First Class Bob Clark, the man who was on duty Sunday evening and saw the object through binoculars.

"The object we saw was going in a northerly direction from the base about four miles away

and about 1,500 feet above the base," Clark said.

"It had three lights — one red, one green and one white and they were very close together. The lights flashed in sequence; red, green, white, red, green, white. That was about 30 minutes before we got it on radar."

Clark made a telephone call to Jacksonville Central Federal Aviation Authority and asked if there were any planes in the area. The authority told Clark there were none, he said.

The unidentified aircraft appeared on radar first as being stationary, but when the men attempted to get a lock on it, Young said, the object disappeared. It returned several minutes later but repeatedly eluded a radar fix, Young said.

Young said the radar operator, Timothy Collins, said that "in his eight years as an operator, he'd never seen anything maneuver as quickly as that maneuvered."

Collins, who described himself as a confirmed skeptic about unidentified objects, said, "A blip is a blip on the scope. At the time I was too busy doing my job to think very much about what it was we were looking at. I just know I couldn't lock in. We were tracking it and at first I thought I had it. But it started moving and by the time I caught up with it, it had changed directions."