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By AFSIRC
Date: 25 SEP 1974

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K-AAF-LD-SOUDRESTRON-HI
JAN-JUN 1953

P.R.C.

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INTRODUCTION

Greenland's location is important in both war and peace. We are situated geographically where the air routes from the United States to Europe and Asia pass over or near the island. Water traffic is limited to a few months of the year; this causes a rush of traffic from June through October, as all the years supplies must be brought in during this short summer shipping season. The remainder of the year, we are supplied by air traffic only.

Supply is the predominant problem at any isolated base and so is this true at Sondrestrom. Upon arrival all officers are requested to tour the base and especially the base supply area. This is to acquaint them with the storage and warehousing problems. There is 51,000 square feet of warehouse space available with 240,000 actually required.¹ The supplies that cannot be put under cover are placed on semi-improved hardstands.

Dry cleaning is sent to Goose Air Base, Labrador, by aircraft. At the present time, plans are underway to provide a laundry and dry cleaning plant for this base in the near future.

Sondrestrom was built during World War II and most of the buildings are old, but they have been rehabilitated and are warm and comfortable even though not up to Air Force standards.

Personnel problems are sometimes acute because of the rotation factor and the low skill level in the Air Force as a whole.

The population of Sondrestrom varies from some 800 in the winter to over 2,000 during the summer shipping and "Tourist" season.² This presents an interesting situation in that food, billeting,

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transportation and other necessities must be provided for these additional people. Many times our facilities are stretched to the point where beds must be set up in the gymnasium to provide room for everyone.

Mail, the big morale factor, comes in as the weather allows and the aircraft are available. Sometimes we go eight (8) to ten (10) days without mail but generally mail service is good for an overseas base.

It is hoped that the reader may gain some useful information concerning Arctic operations at Sondrestrom as he progresses with this history.

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PART III

OPERATIONS

This section of the Historical Report will cover the functions of the Staff Operations Section and the various sections under the jurisdiction of the Staff Operations Officer. These include Intelligence, Base Operations, Traffic, Billeting and Base Communications.

During this period the Operations Staff Officer, Major Gillespie, was replaced by Major Hitchcock. A brief summary of the highlights show that action has been completed and the Base Defense Plan is now in effect, supplies and Mint Julep personnel arrived and activities on the Ice Cap are in the eighth week,² USN Aerial Photo Survey Detachment³ arrived and commenced operations, using the Base Photo Lab with Lt. D. B. Brady, USN, acting as Liaison Officer.

Major J. W. Hitchcock has been appointed additional duty as Intelligence Officer. Due to the geographic location of this base intelligence is somewhat limited in its collection capabilities.

Airman Hoy, Intelligence Specialist, is due to rotate 17 July and Airman Juen will take over as his replacement. At the present time the duties of the Intelligence Specialist here are, to assist the Operations Staff Officer in Base Defense, handling of classified Intelligence Documents and sightings of unidentified aircraft or object reports, and to assist the Security Section on inspections of safes whenever possible.

The following is a brief Intelligence summary of Intelligence sightings within the NEAC area during this reporting period.⁴

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The first report of the year was information received from Grondal, Greenland, stating that an unidentified aircraft overflew Cape Tobin, 7024N-2158W, on 5 Jan 53. Two hours and five minutes later aircraft overflew Aputiteq, 6700N-3205W, headed in a southerly direction. Aircraft was of the twin-engine type flying low in each instance. Negative information was our reply.

On 26 Feb 53, Thule AB reported an unidentified GCA sighting. Negative reply was submitted.

An unidentified aircraft overflew Angmagssalik, 6535N-3745W, on 24 Jan 53. Aircraft approached from the west and disappeared in an easterly direction.

A radio message received from Resolute Bay, reported four vapor trails over Resolute on 1 Mar 53, direction north to south. Negative information reply was dispatched from this station.

Again on 1 Mar 53, contrails were sighted over Simiutak, Greenland. Contrails were moving northwest to southeast. On 11 Mar 53, Sondrestrom AB, reported unidentified contrails which curved south, approximately 50 miles southwest of this base.

On 8 Apr 53, Sondrestrom reported sighting of an unidentified white light, by pilot and co-pilot of a MATS aircraft enroute from Goose AB to Sondrestrom AB, at 6600N-5330W, approximately 110 miles south of base. Received negative reply from other stations.

It was reported that on 27 Mar 53, by late information from Harmon AFB, that an unidentified object was cited by two civilians in a wooded area near Harmon. The men entered the woods to haul pulp wood. The area became light, and an object shaped like a

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light bulb, about six inches long, went past them and put out the lantern that they were carrying. No estimate of speed was given and the object disappeared over the mountains. The object came from a northwest direction. In the same area on 18 Apr 53, Mrs. Anthony Young, observed the same type of glow over her barn. An object described as above came into view and disappeared over the sea. Mrs. Young stated that objects have been observed many times since last fall but never before that time. All objects were noiseless and all travelled at a high rate of speed. No action was taken.

Report received this station on 12 Apr 53, of an unidentified B-29 type aircraft two miles north of Torbay Airport, Newfoundland, at an altitude of 200 feet above the terrain. The Director of Intelligence, NEAC, evaluated this sighting to be an uncorrelated friendly aircraft.

A jet aircraft was sighted by Capt. R. L. Embery, pilot, and 1st Lt. J. R. Morin, radar observer, F-94 aircraft of the 59th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, approximately 10 miles south of Goose AB, Labrador, on 2 May 53. The aircraft was approximately 10,000 feet below F-94 which was flying at 24,000 feet. Both aircraft climbed to 40,000 feet. The unidentified aircraft continued to climb until out of sight with a speed well in excess of F-94. The pilot declared aircraft was similar to F-94 with afterburner but further stated it was unlike any USAF aircraft. Negative report from this headquarters.

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Another report of sighting from Angmagasalik, Greenland, on 2 May 53, an unidentified aircraft was observed from the ground by observers of unknown experience, flying from northwest to southeast at a very high altitude. NEAC evaluates aircraft as friendly. Check of flight plans showed USAF, C-54, number 2689, was over this area at approximate time of sighting.

Information received this headquarters from Narsarssuak AB, stated that an unidentified aircraft was sighted through an over-cast over Aputiteq, Greenland, on 9 May 53. The aircraft was flying southwest with no identifying markings visible. The Commander of Iceland Defense Force states Iceland Defense Force PBY was in this area and is of the opinion that subject PBY was aircraft sighted at Aputiteq, Greenland.

A report of an unidentified airborne sighting by airborne radar 39 miles NW of Goose AB, Labrador, on 13 May 53. This sighting was made by Lt. D. C. Rogers, pilot, and Lt. J. A. Lane, radar observer who attempted interception but the object was lost before visual contact could be made. Radar presentation was that of a multi-engine aircraft. No information from this station.

On 4 May 53, an unidentified flying object was visually sighted by a Canadian National female civilian. The object was reflected in the beam of a rotating beacon. This object was travelling south at low altitude and high speed and was the color of light metal with a shape of a football. It made noise similar to pieces of tin striking each other. The object disappeared in low clouds near the base. NEAC evaluated this as an unidentified object.

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On 21 May 53, RCAF airways at Resolute Bay reported that an unidentified aircraft flew over Resolute site at approximately 400 feet altitude in a south to north direction. Due to the low ceiling, the aircraft was not visually sighted. Resolute states that the aircraft must have let down on Resolute beacon to make a low fly path. Negative reply was given from this station pertaining to this sighting. NEAC evaluates this incident as a possible soviet aerial reconnaissance mission.

The aircraft that overflow Pond Inlet, 7242N-7813W, heading NW at a high altitude and was heard through an overcast, and first believed to be RCAF Lancaster, VC-212, temporarily based at Frobisher on photo reconnaissance missions, is erroneous. Message from Thule AB, Greenland, indicated the unidentified aircraft can be correlated with MATS C-124, which departed Thule AB at 23/0811Z May 53, enroute to McChord via Churchill.

Possible correlation of aircraft sighted over Port Harrison on 29 May 53, is believed to be RCAF Lancaster that departed Rockcliffe. Another report of twin-engine single tail aircraft was reported over Whale River Area, 5120N-7800W, on the 30th of May 53. A preliminary evaluation from Headquarters, Northeast Air Command, stated same aircraft as Lancaster over Port Harrison.

Approximately 25 single blips unidentified flying objects, were sighted by GCA screen radar in the vicinity of Goose Air Base, during period 0334Z to 0600Z on the 11th of June 1953. Blips resembled aircraft with speed of 30-100 knots. Altitudes were undetermined. No specific pattern was indicated in flight of unidentified objects. Evaluated by NEAC Headquarters as unidentified phenomena or flight of birds.

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An unidentified object was sighted 22 June 53, in the vicinity of Goose Air Base, by fighter pilot W. C. Nicholas, on combat patrol. Object appeared to be jet aircraft with afterburner. Object appeared to put on speed and climb through overcast. The pilot followed and saw object through clouds but could not follow because of low fuel.

On 20 June 53, an aircraft was heard but not sighted above clouds over Mint Julep project. The aircraft was identified as friendly by report from AACCS, saying that a SAC aircraft was in that area. Again on 22 June 53, Mint Julep reported that an unidentified contrail was sighted over the cap site at an altitude of approximately 25,000 feet, flying northward at a very high rate of speed. SC-47 at Sondrestrom was dispatched to check for possible identification but was unable to procure additional information. A negative report was received from other stations.

An object collided with and disintegrated a weather balloon at 18,000 feet over Simiutak, Greenland, on 24 June 53. This object was observed through a theodolite by A/2C Richard Hill, weather observer, with three and one half years experience. Object was traveling in southeast to northwest direction at varied speeds. Object described as red, rotating in circular motion with shape as either delta or circular. Object hovered after collision, rotating in a circular motion for 15 seconds, then rapidly departed into the wind, direction, 300 degrees. Observers stated object was three times the size of the weather balloon. Negative information reported from this station.

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An unidentified aircraft was sighted over Tingmiarmiut, Greenland, 6230N-4206W, by entire settlement for approximately ten minutes on 28 June 53. The aircraft disappeared in a westerly direction at an estimated altitude of 9,000 feet. This station had no information of aircraft in that area.

BASE DEFENSE

The Base Defense Plan, which was initiated because of the need for protection of Sondrestrom Air Base in event of open hostilities or attack without warning, has been in the planning stage for quite some time. It was revised again on 13 June 1953, and personnel have been reassigned to flights in accordance with Air Force Regulation 355-4.

Major Harris, Director of Operations Base Defense from NEAC, arrived this base 26 May 53, for the purpose of aiding in the preparation of an adequate defense plan in accordance with AFR 355-4, and as a result a complete new Base Defense Plan has been prepared.

Flights have been established to perform perimeter and internal defense and to act as support flights with a field defensive plan for use of heavy weapons. They will be directed by command post headquarters. Under Alert Condition One, personnel will assemble at designated areas for issue of equipment and briefing. Flight Commanders will prepare their personnel for assigned duties. Code words and authentication tables will be used and observation posts will be designated by flight commanders.

Base Defense training exercises are held Saturday afternoons. Its functions include lectures, training films, drill and the operation

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NOTES

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1. Reference "Base Defense Plan-Annex C" to SAB EWP 1-53 - Central Files 6621st Air Base Squadron.
2. Reference Operations Plan 2-53, 27 April Central Files 6621st Air Base Squadron.
3. Reference NEAC Operations Order 3-53, 29 April 1953.
4. Intelligence Files, 6621st Air Base Squadron, Sondrestrom Air Base.
5. SAB Commanders Estimate of the situation, dated 13 June 1953 - Central Files Sondrestrom Air Base.
6. See picture of camp site following page 16.
7. Air University Letter Order 83-2 dated 24 March 1953.
8. See graph following page 23.
9. See graph following page 24.
10. See appendix # 4 "Transient Personnel Billeted".
11. See two pictures following page 29.
12. See appendix # 2 "Issue Slips".

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