

H I S T O R Y

O F

6621ST AIR BASE SQUADRON  
(SONDRESTROM AIR BASE)

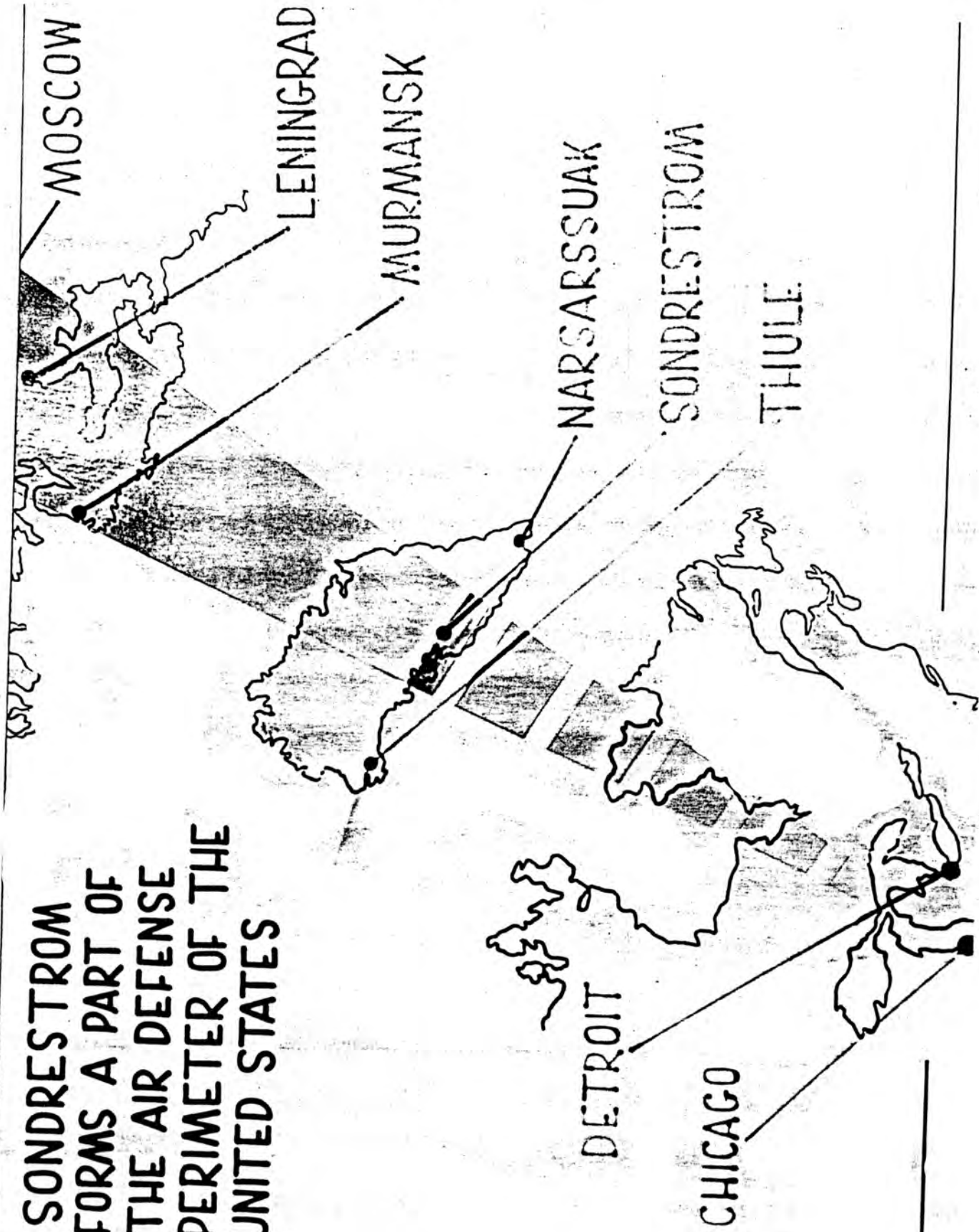
1 JULY 1953 - 31 DECEMBER 1953

RCS: 1AF-D2

1ST LT PATRICK J. MURPHY  
HISTORICAL OFFICER  
A/1C DALE D. WINCH  
ASS'T. HISTORIAN

NORTHEAST AIR COMMAND

SONDRESTROM  
FORMS A PART OF  
THE AIR DEFENSE  
PERIMETER OF THE  
UNITED STATES



## INTELLIGENCE

During the reporting period 1 July through 31 December 1953 the Intelligence grew in scope and importance. Despite the fact that Intelligence work is somewhat limited due to our geographical location, various projects were undertaken by the section; projects directed by higher headquarters such as exercise "Cordwood", and the Base Defense Plan were supervised by the Intelligence Office.

On 14 September, Airman Juen started a card catalog reference system for the maintaining of an Intelligence library. Pertinent information as to the name, date, pages, and a brief description of the article was typed on a 3" X 5" card for most of the important classified documents contained in the section. The need for this card reference system was most urgent since Intelligence very often refers to important subjects contained in these documents.

A number of vital Intelligence sightings were reported from various sources in and around Sondrestrom Air Base. The first of these sightings was received by Base Operations on 19 July when the pilot of a MATS C-54, Aircraft number 5529 sighted an unidentified aircraft at 64° 35' N, 54° 30' W, at an altitude of 4,000 feet. The pilot reported that the type of aircraft and the number of engines was unknown. He made his report after landing at Goose Bay, and immediately upon receipt of the message at this base, the report was passed along to other bases in the command. A check of flight plans revealed negative results from each station, and no final evaluation concerning this sighting has ever been received.

On July 30th, Dr. Holmes, a scientist at the Mint Julep site,

reported seeing two or more contrails estimated to be 25 to 50 miles west of the camp site, and at a height of approximately 18,000 feet, proceeding in a southerly direction. Minutes later another message was received from Dr. Holmes. This time he stated that he used binoculars and that the aircraft was not seen, but only contrails were formed on sighting. The contrails formed for approximately 10 minutes and more or less parallel. Weather conditions at the time were 20,000 scattered and with unlimited visibility. Dr. Holmes further stated that at the sighting it was impossible to estimate the speed because the direction of the aircraft was on the oblique from point of sighting. The length of the trail was estimated to be around 10 miles, and was visible for 25 minutes. A negative reply was received concerning this sighting from all other bases, except Narsarssuak Air Base that reported the only possibility being one SA-16 reported to be over that general direction at 12,000 feet southbound from Sondrestrom to Narsarssuak. Headquarters NEAC tentatively evaluated this sighting to be the SA-16 enroute from Sondrestrom Air Base to Narsarssuak.

One unidentified object was observed over Sondrestrom by Major Trumbower and Major Perry on 18 October while flying the local C-47 type aircraft. They reported the sighting was displaying on white light at an altitude of approximately 6,000 feet, heading in an easterly direction. They were flying at 4,000 feet and the sighting passed them on a heading of 290 degrees approximately 2,000 feet above and to the left of the C-47. they continued to see the sighting for approximately 15 minutes while it passed

over the base on various headings. The pilots were unable to identify the sighting as an aircraft other than by its movement in turns and climbs. Once the sighting passed the C-47 on approximately the same heading at a speed estimated to be 400 miles per hour, then the object appeared to be climbing gradually and was last seen approximately 18 to 20,000 feet on a north-west heading. The local GCA unit picked up the sighting on their scope at approximately the same time and monitored it for approximately 15 minutes, except for short times when it went off their scope. No other aircraft was reported in vicinity of the field at this time. Weather balloons were released at this base earlier to the reporting time of the sighting, but GCA, the C-47 pilots, and Air Traffic Control Officer on duty in the tower denied that sighting could have been the balloon. A check of flight plans from other bases revealed a negative report, and no final evaluation has been received concerning this sighting.

Reference to a CONFIDENTIAL sighting in this general area can be found in the Intelligence section under the heading of "Vital Intelligence Sightings From Sondrestrom Air Base".

In September Captain Fontaine and Airman Juen presented a series of News Reports, or Intelligence briefings to officers and enlisted personnel as part of the regular I & E program. A complete coverage of world news was presented. The reports were part of an effort by this section to inform the base personnel of current events because a noticable apathetic attitude towards world affairs had been developed by a majority of men on this base.