

PROJECT 1947

UFOs Over Hanford: Commander R.W. Hendershot

The Hanford Nuclear Reservation was established in 1943 on the Columbia River in the town of Hanford, Washington State. It became home to the "B Reactor", the first large-scale reactor for the production of plutonium necessary for the construction of the atomic bombs that were soon to be used against Japan. The development and purpose of Hanford was classified Top Secret.

Located some 60 miles northwest of Hanford was the Pasco Naval Air Station. Pasco was responsible for the training of navy pilots in carrier-based combat flying.



WW II Pasco NAS Control Tower with F6F Hellcats

In 1945, after a series of "unidentified aircraft" were detected overflying Hanford's highly classified location, [Pasco was tasked by Headquarters, Fourth Air Force](#), to employ both radar and fighter aircraft in an attempt to intercept the mysterious intruders.

Without giving any clue as to the purpose of the Hanford plant, the military declared the air space over the facility a "Danger Area", with military pilots authorised to open fire on any unidentified aircraft intruding into it.

Throughout the latter part of 1944 and early 1945, a number of "unknowns" were detected by radar, flying over the Hanford facility. Aircraft were dispatched to intercept them, but without success. One such attempted intercept was carried out by Commander R.W. Hendershot who revealed details of his mission many decades later.



Navy SNJ Similar to Hendershot's Plane

For years all we had of Hendershot's statement was a quarter sheet of typed paper in the CUFOS files. Now we have Commander Hendershot's original handwritten statement from the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives.

An attached note stated that Aerial Phenomena Research Associates [APRA of Seattle, Washington] would undertake a tape recorded interview with Commander Hendershot at a future time. If such an interview did take place, the recording might yet be located among the Keyhoe Archives tape files, or among the holdings of the Robert Gribble collection.

A transcribed copy of the letter appears below the original.

In the latter part of December 1944 and January and February 1945, Radar operators at the Naval Air Station Pecos, N.M. reported unusual blips on their radar screens. These blips appeared out of nowhere and proceeded from the north of the air station to the southeast and consequently off of the radar screen. A fighter pilot was made available with an armed F6F fighter and given orders to shoot down anything that appeared to be hostile. He was vectored out on two occasions that this writer remembers, but, in each instance made no contact. The blips ^{seemed} to be much like a P-51 aircraft and at about the same speed. The writer was vectored out one afternoon in an SNJ aircraft to make contact with one of these blips. This particular one appeared to be very high according to the radar operators. Nothing was sighted, but the operator reported two blips on the screen. The writer is convinced that there was something there, but, the mystery as to what it was will apparently never be answered.

Col. R. W. Hendershot
USNR.

12. 11. 1945.




2364 E. 70th.
Seattle 15, Wn.

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Cdr R.W. Hendershot

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