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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TAB	SUBJECT
A	Intelligence Report dated 5 Oct 1951 (S)
B	OSI Report dated 30 Oct 1951 (S)
C	Reinterrogation of Pilot dated 11 Dec 1951 (S)
D	Balloon Data, 4 December 1951
E	MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE (S)

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Epu[redacted]/57
By Auth CG 27th Air Div (Def)

AF FORM 112—PART I
APPROVED 1 JUNE 1948

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COUNTRY	REPORT NO.	(LEAVE BLANK)
USA	1	

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

SUBJECT: High Flying Unidentified Object

AREA REPORTED ON: Long Beach, Muroc, and March Air Force Base, California

FROM (Agency): CG 27th Air Division (Def), Norton AFB, Calif.

DATE OF REPORT: 5 October 1951

DATE OF INFORMATION: 23 September 1951

EVALUATION: F-6

PREPARED BY (Officer): William F. White
1st Lt. William F. WHITE, Director of Intelligence

SOURCE: Report to CG, 27th Air Div from Controllers, ADCC and 669th AC&W Squadron

REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable): ADC Letter 200-1, dated 11 April 1951 and TWX from CG 27th Air Div (Def)-Norton AFB-Calif dated 25 September 1951

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. One significance in final one estimate paragraph. List inclusions at lower left. Begin first of report on AF Form 112, Part II.)

0710 PST

At 1610Z, 23 September 1951, an object was sighted and reported over Long Beach, California, at 50,000 feet. Four (4) F-86 were dispatched to investigate and sighted object over Muroc, California. Attaining an altitude of 43,000 feet, F-86 sighted object to be in a constant orbit in the vicinity of March Air Force Base, California, at an altitude between 50,000 feet and 55,000 feet. Object appeared to be a swept-wing, fighter-type aircraft.

Santa Maria, San Diego and Long Beach are regularly scheduled to release weather balloons which can easily rise to 50,000 feet, may have a kite attached that can give off reflection, and can expand greatly if they are 350 gram balloons.

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0700 1300

DOWNGRADED AT [illegible] INTERVALS;
DECLASSIFIED [illegible] 12 YEARS.
DOD DIR 5200.10

1 INCLS

Statement by JAMES M. HARVEY, Captain, USAF, dated 23 September 1951 (SECRET)

DISTRIBUTION BY ORIGINATOR

Original and one copy to CG ADC, Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio, Attention: MCIS
One Copy to CG ADC, Ent AFB, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Attention: Director of Intelligence

NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE [redacted] OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE ACT, 50 U. S. C.—31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELA[redacted] MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. IT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED IN WHOLE OR IN PART, BY [redacted] AGENCIES, EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE, USAF.

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By Auth: CO 27th Air Div

AF FORM 112—PART II
APPROVED 1 JUNE 1948

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AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)	REPORT NO.	PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES
CG 27th Air Division (Def), Norton AFB, California	1	

The inclosed report was received by Captain J. R. STEELE, Chief Controller, ADCC, from Major LEO MELZER, Operations Officer, 750th ACAW Squadron. The report was read back and verified by Major MELZER.

Major MELZER checked Edwards AFB Flight Dispatcher and Control Tower Operator concerning aircraft from Edwards AFB in flight. No jet or conventional aircraft had taken off from Edwards AFB. The Operations Officer confirmed that no experimental aircraft to his knowledge were scheduled for flight. Edwards AFB Flight Dispatcher checked Nellis AFB, Inyokern, and George AFB Operations and reported that no flight had been airborne at the time that would approximate descriptions given.

Major MASSUSSIER, CO of the 750th ACAW Squadron, asked General BOYD, CG of Edwards AFB, whether he knew of any flight to which General BOYD replied in the negative. General BOYD suggested that North American Company at Los Angeles International Airport be checked. Major MELZER checked Bell Aircraft, N.A.C.A., Douglas, North American and Northrup, but only an MP at Northrup answered any of these calls and reported that there had been no activity all morning. Bell has been experimenting with X-1 and X-5; N.A.C.A. with the XF-92; Douglas with the D 558; and Northrup with the X-3.

Edwards AFB Weather Station reported that Santa Maria, San Diego and Long Beach are regularly scheduled to release weather balloons which can easily rise to 50,000 feet and can expand "like a house" if they are 350 gram balloons. Balloons released by Santa Maria usually drift over Long Beach and Riverside, the flight that was reported as sighted. A kite may be attached to the balloon as a "sounding set" and may give off reflection.

Major MELZER also spoke to Captain HARVEY, one of the pilots who sighted the object (see inclosed statement), who stated the object appeared to be orbiting when he sighted it and not going "too fast." This was in the March AFB area.

NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE ACT, 50 U.S.C. 31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. IT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED IN WHOLE OR IN PART, BY [redacted] AGENCIES, EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE, USAF.

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9200 [redacted] 8/10/51
By Auth CO 27th Air Div (Def)

S T A T E M E N T

23 September 1951

On 23 September 1951 at approximately 0810 ST a bogie was sighted about 50,000 feet over Long Beach. I, Captain James H Harvey and my flight of four were dispatched by Kill Deer to investigate this bogie. When we sighted this bogie he appeared to be over Muroc. When we reached an altitude of 43,000 feet this object was in the vicinity of March Air Force Base.

From 43,000 feet this bogie appeared to be between 50,000 and 55,000 feet and also appeared to be a swept-wing, fighter-type aircraft. He was also noted to be in a constant orbit.

James H Harvey
JAMES H HARVEY
Captain USAF

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

5D 24-21

20 November 1951

SUBJECT: Sighting of Unidentified Object
Over Long Beach, California
on 23 September 1951
SPECIAL INQUIRY

[redacted]

RHS
20 Nov

TO: Commanding Officer
Air Technical Intelligence Center
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio
ATTN: ATI

1. Attached hereto for your information are two copies of the report of investigation by Special Agent FRED T. RAGSDALE, 18th OSI District, file 24-129, dated 30 October 1951, subject as above.

2. No further investigative action is contemplated in this case, and the files of the Office of Special Investigations are considered closed in instant case.

3. Attention is invited to paragraph 7, AFR 205-1, dated 14 March 1949, which prohibits the disclosure of classified information to unauthorized personnel.

Reagan A. Scurlock
REAGAN A. SCURLOCK
Lt Colonel, USAF
Acting District Commander

1 Incl (in dup)
R/I, DO #18, dtd 30 Oct 51

Copy to:
Hq OSI w/o abv incl

When Inclosure No. 1 is withdrawn or not attached, the classification of this communication will be downgraded to [redacted] in accordance with paragraph 25e, AFR 205-1.

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Hq USAF 18D 24-129, Subject: Sighting of Unidentified Object

27ADDI 360.1 (30 Oct 51) 1st Ind

HQ 27TH AIR DIVISION (DEFENSE) Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, California

NOV 1 1951

TO: CO ATIC Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio

Forwarded herewith is the Report of Investigation requested by your Headquarters, reference ATIAA-2 Grudge.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

1 Incl:
n/c

C. P. WASHINGTON
2ND LT USAF
Asst Air Adj Gen

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WASHINGTON
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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

[redacted]

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL USAF
18th DISTRICT OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS
AF SPECIALIZED DEPOT, BOX 310, HAYWOOD, CALIF.

18D 24-129

30 October 1951

SUBJECT: Sighting of Unidentified Object
Over Long Beach, California,
On 23 September 1951.
SPECIAL INQUIRY

TO: Commanding General
Headquarters, 27th Air Division (Defense)
Norton Air Force Base
San Bernardino, California

1. Reference is made to your letter of 22 October 1951, entitled "High Flying Unidentified Object", your file number 27ADDI 360.1, requesting this District Office to conduct an investigation concerning the sighting of an unidentified object over Long Beach, California, on 23 September 1951.

2. Attached is the original and one copy of a report prepared by Special Agent FRED T. RAGSDALE, which sets forth the results of our investigation pertaining to this matter.

3. This District Office anticipates conducting no further investigation on this case unless so requested by your Headquarters.

KERBY O KERBO
Colonel, USAF
District Commander

1 Incl:
Rpt of S/A FRED T. RAGSDALE,
dtd 30 Oct. 1951 (in dup.)

cc: Hqs OSI (w/incl)

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS
REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

UNCLASSIFIED

FILE NO. 24-129

DATE 30 October 1951

REPORT MADE BY FRED T. RAGSDALE

REPORT MADE AT DO #18, Maywood, California

PERIOD 25, 26, 30 October 1951

OFFICE OF ORIGIN DO #18, Maywood, California

STATUS CLOSED

TITLE: Sighting of Unidentified Object Over Long Beach, California, On 23 September 1951

CHARACTER: SPECIAL INQUIRY

REFERENCE: TWX to Hqs OSI, dated 26 October 1951

SYNOPSIS:

The Commanding General, 27th Air Division, Norton AFB, San Bernardino, California, requested an investigation concerning the sighting of an unidentified object over Long Beach, California, on 23 September 1951. The object was sighted at 0810 hours at 50,000 feet. Four F-86's were dispatched to investigate and sighted object over Muroc, California. Attaining an altitude of 43,000 feet, the F-86's reported object to be in constant orbit in the vicinity of March AFB, California, at an altitude between 50,000 and 55,000 feet. Object appeared to be a swept wing fighter type aircraft. A check with aircraft manufacturers in the Southern California area revealed that none had scheduled test flights of experimental aircraft on the date object was seen. Weather balloons are released by three weather stations in Southern California, which rise to a height in excess of 50,000 feet. It was found that all three of these stations released a balloon on the morning of 23 September 1951. The operators of these stations said that there was a possibility that the object sighted was one of the balloons which had been released just prior to the time this object was reportedly seen.

DISTRIBUTION

CG, 27th Air Div (action copies)	2
Hqs OSI (AIRMAIL)	2
File	2

ACTION COPY FORWARDED TO

Commanding General
27th Air Division (Defense)
Norton Air Force Base
San Bernardino, California

FILE STAMP

APPROVED

KEEFE O'KEEFE
Colonel, USAF
District Commander

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AFMD FORM 15 JAN 45 0-208 Replaces AFOSI Form 4, 25 Jul 48, [redacted]

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DETAILS:

1. The investigation of this matter was predicated upon a letter from the Commanding General, Headquarters, 27th Air Division, Norton AFB, San Bernardino, California, dated 22 October 1951, requesting this District Office to make an investigation concerning the sighting of an unidentified object over Long Beach, California, on 23 September 1951.

2. At the time this matter was referred to this office, the 27th Air Division furnished an Intelligence Report which sets forth the following information.

"At 1610Z, 23 September 1951, an object was sighted and reported over Long Beach, California, at 50,000 feet. Four (4) F-86 were dispatched to investigate and sighted object over Muroc, California. Attaining an altitude of 43,000 feet, F-86 sighted object to be in a constant orbit in the vicinity of March Air Force Base, California, at an altitude between 50,000 feet and 55,000 feet. Object appeared to be a swept-wing, fighter-type aircraft.

"Santa Maria, San Diego and Long Beach are regularly scheduled to release weather balloons which can easily rise to 50,000 feet, may have a kite attached that can give off reflection, and can expand greatly if they are 350 gram balloons.

"The inclosed report was received by Captain J. R. STEELE, Chief Controller, ADCC, from Major LEO MELZER, Operations Officer, 750th AC&W Squadron. The report was read back and verified by Major MELZER.

"Major MELZER checked Edwards AFB Flight Dispatcher and Control Tower Operator concerning aircraft from Edwards AFB in flight. No jet or conventional aircraft had taken off from Edwards AFB. The Operations Officer confirmed that no experimental aircraft to his knowledge were scheduled for flight. Edwards AFB Flight Dispatcher checked Nellis AFB, Inyokern, and George AFB Operations and reported that no flight had been airborne at the time that would approximate descriptions given.

"Major MANUSSIER, CO of the 750th AC&W Squadron, asked General BOYD, CO of Edwards AFB, whether he knew of any flight to which General BOYD replied in the negative. General BOYD suggested that North American Company at Los Angeles International Airport be checked. Major MELZER checked Bell Aircraft, N.A.C.A., Douglas, North American and Northrup, but only an MP at Northrup answered any of these calls and reported that there had been no activity all morning. Bell has been experimenting with X-1 and X-5; N.A.C.A. with the XF-92; Douglas with the D 558; and Northrup with the X-3."

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"Edwards AFB Weather Station reported that Santa Maria, San Diego and Long Beach are regularly scheduled to release weather balloons which can easily rise to 50,000 feet and can expand "like a house" if they are 350 gram balloons. Balloons released by Santa Maria usually drift over Long Beach and Riverside, the flight that was reported as sighted. A kite may be attached to the balloon as a "sounding set" and may give off reflection.

"Major MELZER also spoke to Captain HARVEY, one of the pilots who sighted the object (see inclosed statement), who stated the object appeared to be orbiting when he sighted it and not going "too fast." This was in the March AFB area."

"S T A T E M E N T

23 September 1951

"On 23 September 1951 at approximately 0810 ST a bogie was sighted about 50,000 feet over Long Beach. I, Captain James H. Harvey and my flight of four were dispatched by Kill Deer to investigate this bogie. When we sighted this bogie he appeared to be over Muroc. When we reached an altitude of 43,000 feet this object was in the vicinity of March Air Force Base.

"From 43,000 feet this bogie appeared to be between 50,000 and 55,000 feet and also appeared to be a swept-wing, fighter-type aircraft. He was also noted to be in a constant orbit.

"s/t
JAMES H. HARVEY
Captain USAF

"CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

/s/ Ethel P. Hoffman
ETHEL P. HOFFMAN
Major, USAF"

3. The Air Defense Command suggested the possibility that this object was an experimental aircraft which was being test flown for one of the aircraft manufacturing concerns located in this area.

4. From the information set forth above, it will be noted that this object was first sighted over Long Beach. The F-86's, after being dispatched to investigate, sighted the object over Muroc, California, which is some 100 miles due North of Long Beach. Captain HARVEY, the flight leader, said that when the F-86's attained an altitude of 43,000 feet, the object was sighted in the vicinity of March AFB. The March AFB is some

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125 miles South and East of Muroc. Therefore, after being first sighted, the object appeared to travel due North for some 100 miles and then South-east for approximately 125 miles.

5. Special Agent ARTHUR J. MAIKOSKI made inquiry at the following aircraft companies in an effort to determine if they were test flying any experimental aircraft on 23 September 1951.

Northrop Aircraft Company
Hawthorne, California

North American Aviation, Inc.
Inglewood, California

Douglas Aircraft Company, Inc.
El Segundo, California

Lockheed Aircraft Company
Burbank, California

Hughes Aircraft Company
Culver City, California

It was found that none of these companies was test flying experimental aircraft on the date this object was seen. The above companies are under contract to build aircraft for both the U. S. Air Forces and U. S. Navy.

6. Special Agent THOMAS J. McARDLE made inquiry at the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, San Diego, California, and they advised that, although they were presently working on experimental aircraft, they did not have a flight scheduled for 23 September 1951.

7. Colonel C. E. JACKSON, Air Force Engineering Field Office, 5504 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, advised that he knew of no experimental aircraft which was being test flown on the date this object was seen. He stated that practically all USAF experimental aircraft are test flown at Edwards AFB, Muroc, California. In this respect, it will be noted that the 27th Air Division made inquiry at Edwards AFB and they reported that no experimental aircraft was scheduled for flight on 23 September 1951.

8. Special Agent MELFORD M. LEAKE interviewed Major KENNETH T. BROOKS, Detachment Commander, Weather Division, Long Beach AFB, Long Beach, California. He claimed that a weather balloon is released by his station approximately every six hours. He said that his records show that one was released between the hours of 0645 and 0745 on the morning of 23 September 1951 and that due to mechanical difficulties, contact with the balloon was lost at 42,900 feet. The rate of ascent of this balloon was 1000 feet per minute and was traveling in a general North Easterly and

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later Westerly direction.

9. Lt. OLIVER A. WAGGONER, Forecaster at the Long Beach Weather Station, advised that, in his opinion, the balloon could not have been more than eight miles from point of release at Long Beach at the time his office lost contact with it.

10. Major BROOKS said that this balloon at 43,000 feet would be about 20 feet in diameter and the size and shape would be determined by the wind currents and the wind speed. Twenty feet below the balloon on a cord is attached a red paper parachute which is connected to a radio transmitter encased in a small white glossy cardboard box approximately 1' x 8".

11. Special Agent HENRY O. CHAPPELL interviewed Mr. P. S. NELSON, General Services Meteorologist, Hancock Field, Santa Maria, California, and he advised that his station released two weather balloons on 23 September 1951. One was released at 0300Z hours (1900 hours Pacific Standard Time, 22 September 1951), and one was released at 1505Z hours (0705 Pacific Standard Time, 23 September 1951). The one which was released on 22 September 1951 attained an altitude of 78,000 feet and was contacted for 68 minutes by radio. The one which was released on 23 September 1951 remained in the air 74 minutes and attained an altitude of 100,000 feet. He said that the course of the balloons would depend upon the wind velocity and that the average winds from Santa Maria are traveling in a Southeasterly direction. He stated that it was doubtful that one of the balloons which was released at Santa Maria, which is some 175 miles North and West of Long Beach, could have traveled from Santa Maria South to Long Beach then North to Santa Maria, and then South and East to March AFB. A description of the balloon at an altitude of some 50,000 feet was the same as that furnished by Major BROOKS.

12. Special Agent THOMAS McARDLE was advised by Lt. Commander D. C. WEST, Weather Station Officer, Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, that his station released a balloon at approximately 0700 hours PST on 23 September 1951. He claimed that the balloon attained an altitude of some 60,000 feet before it burst. San Diego is approximately 150 miles South of Long Beach.

13. All of the above weather officers stated that there was a possibility that the object sighted was one of the balloons which had been released, however each stated that it was doubtful because of the course which the sighted object reportedly traveled.

14. This matter was coordinated with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Los Angeles, The Office of Naval Intelligence in Los Angeles, and San Diego, and the Counter Intelligence Corps, Fort MacArthur, California. None of these agencies had received any information relative to this matter.

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PUBLIC INF. OFFICE

IN REPLY REFER TO:
AFOIE-ATIAA-2c

COMPTROLLER

SUBJECT: [redacted] High Flying Unidentified Object

TO: Commanding General
27th Air Division (Def)
Attention: Director of Intelligence
Norton Air Force Base
San Bernardino, California

PERSONNEL & ADM.

1. Reference is made to AF Form 112, 71, dated 5 Oct 1951, subject: "High Flying Unidentified Object", in which the incident of an unidentified object sighted over March Air Force Base on 23 Sept 1951 is reported.

RESEARCH & DEV.

2. The possibility of this object being a weather balloon released from San Diego, Long Beach, or Santa Maria or that it was an experimental aircraft has been investigated. It is highly doubtful if the object was a balloon, and it was not an experimental aircraft. Consequently, further investigation of the incident is warranted.

INTELLIGENCE

3. It is requested that the following information be obtained as soon as possible and forwarded to Chief, Air Technical Intelligence Center, Attn: ATIAA-2c, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.

SUPPLY AND MAINT.

a. From what location was the original sighting of the object made? The report states that it was sighted over Long Beach. How was it located, visually or by radar?

b. From what base did the F-86's take off? What was the time of take-off?

PROD. & IND. MOB. PLNG.

c. The report states that the object was first sighted by the F-86's over Muroc. What was the time and location of the F-86's at the time of this sighting? How did they determine the object was over Muroc?

d. The report states that when the F-86's reached an altitude of 43,000 ft. the object was over March Air Force Base. Did the F-86's have the object in sight during its run from Muroc to March Air Force

OTHER

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SUPPLY AND MAINT.

PROC. & IND. MOB. PLNG.*

OTHER

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ATIC, AFOIN-ATIAA-3, Subject: [redacted] High Flying Unidentified Object

Base or did they lose it and sight it again over March Air Force Base? What was the time when the object was sighted over March AFB?

3. Were any types of balloons launched from either Norton AFB or March AFB several hours prior to the time of the sighting of the object over March AFB?

4. In addition to the above specific points, it is requested that the F-86 pilots be reinterrogated and a detailed statement of their attempted interception be submitted. It would be very helpful to include with these a Sectional Chart with the flight path of the F-86's and times of significant occurrences marked.

5. It is realized that due to the time that has elapsed since the incident it may be difficult to get data but it is requested that every effort be made to obtain information that is as accurate as possible.

6. The Air Technical Intelligence Center wishes to express its appreciation for the cooperation received by your Command and the Office of Special Investigations in regard to this incident.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

S. H. KINKLAID, JR.
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Technical Analysis Division

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[redacted] 20/12/57

HEADQUARTERS 27th AIR DIVISION (DEFENSE)
NORTON AIR FORCE BASE
SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA

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In Reply Refer To:
27ADII-360.1

SUBJECT: (Restricted) High Flying Unidentified Object

TO: Commanding General
Air Technical Intelligence Center
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio

1. Reference is made to your letter AFCIN-3ITAA-2, dated 26 November 1957. In compliance with your request, the following information is submitted in answer to the questions contained in paragraph (3) of your letter.

a. Original sighting of object was made visually at 0215 PST from position over Santa Monica Bay as indicated on attached map overlay.

b. Element making original sighting took off from George Air Force Base at 0140 PST.

c. Reports that object was directly over Norton and March Air Force Base were apparently in error, resulting from the difficulty of making a land fix at high altitude. (Based on later interrogation of pilots by DI of First Fighter-Interceptor Wing, when reports indicated both sightings at the same time.)

d. Paragraph 1 c above applies.

e. Norton Air Force Base and March Air Force Base were queried as to the launching of any type balloon, or any other object that might have had the appearance of the object in question, from those bases. Norton Air Force Base replied in the negative; March Air Force Base has not replied to date, and their reply will be forwarded to your headquarters immediately upon receipt. However, the orbit of the object, as compared with the prevailing winds indicated, seems to preclude the possibility of the object being a free balloon.

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27ADIN-360.1, Subject: [redacted] High Flying Unidentified Object

2. Attached are statements of reinterrogation of three pilots still available for questioning, and Sectional Chart indicating significant occurrences, as submitted by the 56th Fighter-Interceptor Wing. (A correction of Captain Reichman's statement was later made verbally to the DI of the Wing: The nature of the scramble was an Air Defense mission, not to intercept an unidentified object as originally stated.)

3. Also attached is a statement by the Commanding Officer of the 669th AC&W Squadron, which indicates that the object was never picked up by radar.

4. It is believed that this data presents as accurate a report as can be obtained. However, if further investigation is desired, this headquarters will make every effort to obtain additional information.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

E. R. Washington

3 Incls.
1. Cy 27 ADIV ltr 360.1 dtd 7 Dec 51, w/1st Ind fr CO, 669th AC&W Sq dtd 13 Dec 51.
2. Cy ATIC ltr AFOIN-ATIAA-2c dtd 28 Nov 51
3. Rpt & Interrogation, High Flying Uniden Object, quad.

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HEADQUARTERS 27th AIR DIVISION (DEFENSE)
NORTON AIR FORCE BASE
SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA

UNCLASSIFIED

In Reply Refer To:
27[illegible]-360.1

DEC 7

SUBJECT: (Restricted) High Flying Unidentified Object

TO: Commanding Officer
669th [illegible] Squadron
Fort MacArthur
San Pedro, California

1. This headquarters has received a request for further investigation of the unidentified object sighted on 23 September 1951, and reported upon by 2nd Lt. Lorimer [illegible] Hay-Chapman of your command.

2. It is requested that the following information be forwarded as soon as possible:

a. Original sighting: how received, time and position.

b. Time and position of later sightings, indicating whether visual or by radar.

c. Detailed report of action taken, including scramble order.

d. If feasible, a Sectional Chart showing flight paths and times of significant occurrences.

3. A detailed report of the interceptor action is also being requested through the 1st Fighter-Interceptor Wing. By correlating the two reports, it is hoped a complete history of the incident may be obtained.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL HUTCHINSON:

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E. F. WASHINGTON
2ND LT USAF
Asst Air Adj Gen

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AG 27th AD (DAF) 360.1 Subject: High Flying Unidentified Object

669th [illegible] 360.1 (7 Dec 51) 1st Ind 13 Dec 51

669th [illegible], Fort MacArthur, California.

TO: Commanding General, 27th Air Division (ADC), Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, California

1. In reference to Par. 2a basic letter the following is submitted.

a. Original sighting received by VHF from Swanee Brown leader at 0755 / 57. The object was over San Dimas, California.

b. Time and position of later sightings: Swanee Brown leader, not saw the object near March Air Force Base, California. All sightings were visual, the object was not picked up by radar.

c. Swanee Brown flight was on an air defense mission when the object was sighted. Swanee Brown was unable to intercept the object because of its high altitude and speed. The GCC Controller was notified of the incident and our attempt to intercept the craft.

d. It is not possible for this Headquarters to show the flight path of the object. It was under surveillance by the pilot for approximately fifteen (15) minutes. The flight path was erratic but in an easterly direction.

JAMES H. DAVIS
Major USAF
Commanding Officer

Incl #1

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STATEMENT

[redacted]

11 December 1951

1. Captain Harold E. Guthrie States: On the 23rd of September I was piloting an F-86E A/C in a flight of four. I took off from George Air Force Base at 0800, 23 September, 1951 for a scramble interception of an unidentified Bogie over the Los Angeles area. At approximately 0810 I sighted an unidentified object over San Antonio PEAK California, (117degrees 40' -34 degrees, 20'N). It appeared to be at 40,000 feet altitude, moving South. This object appeared to be travelling at a slow speed. It was oval shaped with a silverish color, like aluminum. It had a level flight but orbitting right. The flight attempted to intercept; however, at 43,000 feet altitude we broke off because of low fuel. Object sighted was still above us.

2. Q. What action did you take with ACCS when you observed fuel low and had to break interception ?

A. Kill Deer was contacted and informed of our low fuel level. Our flight was released for Pancake.

Q. Did Kill Deer acknowledge your message ?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear any further alerts being directed by Kill Deer ?

A. No.

Q. What time was this ?

A. Approximately 0825.

Q. Did you see any other military A/C in the vicinity ?

A. None.

Q. Were you in Radio Communication with any other military A/C in the vicinity ?

A. No.

Q. Who else, in your particular flight, observed this object ?

A. Captain Harvey, Major Buchanan(transferred to Korea), and Captain Coberly(also now in Korea).

Q. What was the nature of your discussion airborn, when the object was sighted ?

[redacted]

A. We discussed its altitude, speed, and direction of flight.

A (GUTHRIE)

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Statement Cont'd. (Guthrie)

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A. Cont'd/ Kildare asked us to identify, and we found that impossible to do.

Q. Why couldn't you?

A. Object was too high and we were suffering from a fuel shortage.

Q. Direction? Did this object maintain a Southerly direction during your attempt to intercept it?

A. It had maintained orbit to Right.

Q. Your position at 0925 was where and what altitude?

A. In the vicinity of [redacted], Alt: 43,000ft.

Q. Do you know if there were any other interceptors air borne on or about the L.A. area, when you were on intercept crosstie?

A. Yes. Two others from George A.F.B.

Q. Separate flights?

A. Yes, a separate flight.

Q. Do you know if they were aware of the proximity of this object?

A. No. However, they had sighted it at Long Beach and they had sighted it before us.

Q. Can you give me the sequences of Vectors if any given you by ACA or any other such agencies?

A. There were no Vectors given by Kildare because object was not reflected in the radar scope.

Q. Do You know if your flight was observed Kildare scope?

A. I don't know. But I presume they did.

Q. Have you ever requested a Fix from them?

A. Yes, and they have given us a position Fix.

Q. What do you think your object sighted could have been, bearing and its behaviour?

A. It is my opinion it was a free weather balloon, influenced by upper air currents.

[redacted]

HAROLD E. GUTHRIE
Captain USAF
Intelligence Officer

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HEADQUARTERS
1ST FIGHTER-INTERCEPTOR WING
NORTON AIR FORCE BASE, CALIF.

[redacted]

SUBJECT: WEATHER REPORT.

Winds Aloft — 23 Sept 51 UNCL

The following information was extracted from record files maintained by Base Weather Station, Norton AF Base, San Bernardino, California. Major Harmon USAF, Weather Squadron Commanding Officer.

WINDS ALOFT. 23 Sept 51- 1500Z= 0700 hrs Pacific Time

200 M.B. = 40,200 ft. Los Angeles Area

Long Beach— Wind from due West 270 degrees at 20 knots.

Phoenix— " " " " 270 " " 35 " .

Las Vegas— " " " " 280 " " 20 " .

Indicating these winds were constant from West to East

(Note) a. This is at variance with Guthrie who reported object orbitting to right.(item free balloon).
b. Reichman reported "object" orbitting left would be more correct.(item free balloon)
c. Harvey's report—object over Mf. A.F.B. could not, or at least eliminates (item free balloon)

WINDS ALOFT—12 hours later. ie. 0300Z 24th or 1900 Pac Time 23 Sept 51.
Winds change to N.W. with no appreciable increase in velocity, except Tucson..winds up to 45 knots.

TEMPERATURES—aloft were MINUS 55 degrees generally in both cases.

CHAS. F. CASEY
Major USAF
Intelligence Officer
1st. Ftr-Intcp. Wing.

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