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air Ops Officer NATC

MEMO RE: DECEMBER 19, 1964 RADAR CASE AT PATUXENT NAVAL AIR STATION, MARYLAND

January 9, 1965

While opening mail early in the afternoon I received a call from a man who said he was one of those who had tracked the UFOs on radar. I immediately requested that he come to the office to discuss it. He was hesitant and insisted on making it off-the-record. I assured him on this point.

After hanging up the phone, I tried to contact DEK at the hotel but got no answer. Then called Don Berliner and asked him to come over and witness the conversation. The radar man arrived about 15 minutes before Don and had told me much of the story by the time Don arrived, but we went over it again asking questions and talking for another 15-20 minutes so Don can verify the main points.

At my request, the radar man showed me identification as follows: An ID card identifying him as Bernard Sujka on active Navy duty; his certification as a qualified Control Tower Operator. His home town is Albuquerque, N.M. as he stated verbally and as his papers showed. (He thinks he will have a job as CTO in ABQ upon discharge). His bearing and presentation was that of a man who took some pride in his work, and was well-trained in it. He spoke logically, and obviously knew a lot about radar, though he has had only one year experience. He expressed a dislike for military service and hoped to get out soon. At present he is at Walter Reed for a check-up and treatment for an injured leg, which he felt probably would result in a discharge.

The facts of the sighting were as follows: Date December 28 (*), 1964 Time--~~2xxxx~~ 2330Z (about 5:30 p.m. EST). He explained that ~~the~~ sighting leaked out unexpectedly over a week after it occurred, so preliminary information was garbled until records were checked. What he told us was based on more carefully checked facts. Since no report was filed at the time, all angles and directions are only approximate, but they are reasonably accurate.

He was controlling a precision radar approach on one set in the tower with two other CTO's, Chief Pinkerton and Chief Flanagan, when Chief Pinkerton called out something to the effect, "Look at those bastards go!" As soon as Sujka had his plane down--seconds later--he ran to Pinkerton's set and witnessed part of the sighting. However, he saw only <u>one</u> of the UFOs while Pinkerton saw two.

Chief Pinkerton, before he cried out, had seen two UFOs moving SE to NW, staggered 10 miles apart. They had approached within an estimated 15 miles of the base, then were lost. One turned out to SE. On the second pick-up he cried out. This time the UFOs were 39 miles out on a bearing of 140°, heading 320° toward the base covering 8-10 miles per sweep (at 6 seconds per sweep--or about 6000 m.p.h.). They were lost 10 miles SE of station. Sujka arrived in time to see the third appearance: one UFO 8 miles NE of station heading 120°, and making a 160° turn.

The set was on 40 mile range. Based on radar beam data, they knew the UFOs had to be between 3000 and 25,000 feet altitude.

Weather: solid overcast at 2000 feet measured; visibility 7 miles. Temperature 38°, dew point 31. Wind from NW 7 m.p.h.

Sujka checked on base; no visual sightings. Sujka's radio operator's initials are "MX". He checked with "Papa Hotel (PH)" and a friend "JC" at Salisbury Flight Service Station later, and one or both (I forget which) was on duty the night of Dec. 28/29. Coast Guard--possibly from Cape May, he wasn't sure--had called to inquire about sightings of <u>bright objects</u>. Nat'l Airport had no sightings.

Sujka said the UFO painted the <u>biggest target</u> he had ever seen at that distance, that it was "a good solid target" with a slightly blurred trail. He said the two chiefs stated nothing they knew of could account for any

(*) Later corrected to December 19 or 21st?

arget that looked like that. They both felt it was something unexplained.

Four or five people knew something about the radar trackings, but they were going to forget about them when they were surprised to read the news accounts. Sujka had written a letter to NICAP (having read the TRUE article--Jan.65) but it turned out to be inaccurate in some respects after more careful checking so he was just as glad it never arrived. He was called in by his C.O. when the story broke, and his C.O. was under pressure for an answer for the Navy Dept. His comment was something like, "What is all this bull shit about you tracking UFOs on radar?" When the Chiefs backed him up, serious reports were made out.

When Sujka mentioned the letter to NICAP, the C.O. called a postal inspector to locate the letter, then had Sujka remove it from the mail sack. Sujka was instructed not to say anything to the press, and not to write any letters to NICAP. A USAF Major from the Washington area arrived and threw his weight around, but gathered very thorough information. But only after the story broke in the press. USAF had no prior knowledge of the Pax radar sighting.

We discussed temperature inversions with Sujka, and he stated they were easily recognizable small lines or dots on the scope, normally moving all in straight lines, very slowly-about 2 miles in 5 minutes.

The total elapsed time of the last two observations, which made the calculations of speed, etc., possible, was about 30 seconds.

The above is a true and accurate account of the conversation which transpired, to the best of my ability, based on extensive notes taken.

Richard Hall

Richard Hall
1-9-65

Main points witnessed by Don Berliner:

Don Berliner
1/9/65