1952 cc: JEMcD AUG. 1 UNC

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON 20330

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

OCT 9 1969

Dear Mr. Dudek:

This replies to your recent letter in which you requested information on specific sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFO's). The radar solutions for these cases are as follows:

DATE	LOCATION	REMARKS
July 29, 1952	Port Huron, Michigan	Aircraft
Aug. 1, 1952	Bellefontaine, Ohio	Visual (Balloon) Radar (Aircraft)
Aug. 5, 1952	Haneda AB, Japan	Unidentified
Nov. 30, 1952	Washington, D. C.	Unidentified
* Jan. 26, 1953	Continental Divide, N. Mex.	Visual (Astro: Venus) Radar (Weather)
* Feb. 17, 1953	Port Austin, Michigan	Visual (Astro: Venus) Radar (Unidentified)
Aug. 5, 1953	Rapid City, South Dakota	Visual (Astro: Capella) Radar (Unidentified)

There have been no radar sightings submitted to the Air Force in the last five years now categorized as UNIDENTIFIED.

We are inclosing the current Project Blue Book report as you requested.

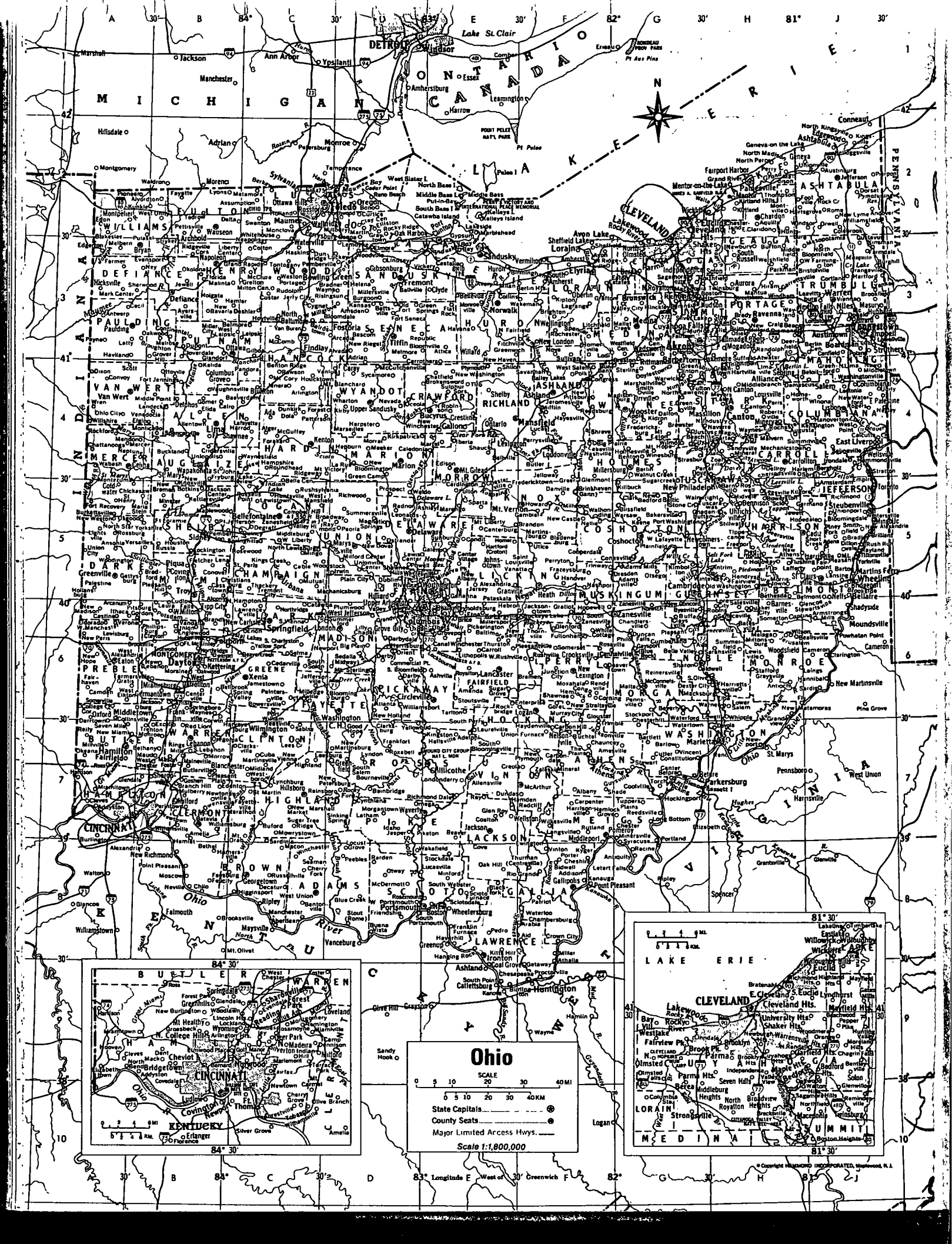
Sincerely,

JAMES H. AIKMAN
Major, USAF
Chief, Civil Branch
Community Relations Division
Office of Information

Attachment

Mr. John Dudek
710 East Williams Street
Benton, Illinois 62812

* ORIGINALLY "UNKNOWNS"


Ohio
SCALE
0 5 10 20 30 40 MI
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State Capitals
County Seats
Major Limited Access Hwys.
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LAKE ERIE
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WEST VIRGINIA
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INDIANA
DETROIT
CLEVELAND
CINCINNATI
COLUMBUS
TOLEDO
Lake St. Clair
Pt. Pelee
Pt. Aux Pins
Pt. Peloe
Longitude West of Greenwich
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1 August 1952 Bellefontaine, Ohio

Description of Incident

At 1551Z, a radar track appeared 20 miles NNW of W-P AFB. The course was 240° at 400 knots. Two F-86's under GCI control were then located ten miles SW of that position. The fighters were vectored and made visual contact at 1555Z. Fighters stayed with the object until 1613Z.

Interrogation of sources, an AF major and lieutenant, reveal the following:

a. The F-86's climbed to 48,000', fell off, and then made a second climb to 48,000'. The major made a camera run the second time and received a weak return on his radar gunsight. The lieutenant's sight was "caged" so he received no return. The major estimated the object at 12,000-20,000' above his altitude of 48,000'. This estimate was substantiated by the range capability of the radar gunsight. The object's size, accepting source's estimate of distance, was 24-40' in diameter and source said his optical sight just covered the object. The films were not sufficiently clear. The object appeared as a fuzzy, small image in the upper right hand corner with discernable motion to lower left.

b. The AC&W Squadron established two important facts: Re-affirmation that the UFO moved at 400 knots and indication that the two F-86's and UFO appeared simultaneously on the GCI scope. It is obvious that all eyes and antennas were fixed on the same object.

Comments

The object was not a balloon, since the speed was too fast. A rawinsonde was released at 1500Z and moved off to the east. The object moved against the wind. The blip size was that of a normal aircraft. The object was not a known aircraft because the altitude was too high. The object was not astronomical as dual radar returns eliminate this. Electronic or visual mirage of meteorological phenomenon is out of the question as the radar set was on high beam, and both would not occur simultaneously in the same place. The sighting occurred "above the weather".

Conclusion

Unknown

7311 JULER AVE. MADEIRA, OHIO

LAMP LIGHTER COMPANY

March 24, 1953

Gentlemen:

Could you people supply us the following data concerning the radar sighting and subsequent jet intercept of an airborn object (in the Dayton area), August 1, 1952.

RADAR SIGHTING

(1). Time of initial sighting.

(2). Location of object at first sighting.

(3). Direction of travel.

JET INTERCEPT

(1). Time of visual contact.

(2). Location of object

(3). Color of object as seen by the pilots.

We are trying to substaniate the possibilty that this object may be the one which we sighted, heading in the Dayton direction, August 1, 1952.

Yours truly,

H. Coffman

Chief Engineer

aug 1-52 case

CAPH

12

Data in re the Bellefontaine case, and a Madeira Ohio UFO same time.

Orig. letter from Mr H. Coffman, Lamp Lighter Co. 7311 Juler Av. Madeira, Ohio (Or check address.) Offering to send data from ATIC and OPI.

Original of letter on ATIC WP AFB letterhead.

13 Apr 1953. In reply refer to AFOIN-ATIAE-5

Mr. H. Coffman, L. C. etc. Madeira Ohio.

Dear Mr. Coffman

Your ltr. dated 24 Mch 53 req info on an u. f. o. sighting in the vic. of dayton on 1 aug. 52 h sbeen rec. by the a .t.i.c. we are giving you a summary of thes. so that you can subst. the poss. of your si. being the same as theone reported to us.

At 1051 EST 1 aug 52 a grd rad. sta. located in Cent. Ohio, picked up a track on thir screen. the unident. target was moving at sgrd speed of 450 kts on a heading of 240 deg(SSW) from a positi approx 20 m. NNW of WPAFBOhio. Two airb. F-86's then u under the grd rad control, were immed. vesct. and sighted an object at 1055 EST. At 1056 EST grd rad lost contact with the ob. The f -86s climbed andphotogr the ob. far above them . the f-86s were low on fuel and at 1113 EST they broke contact andret. to their base. at this time they were about 12 m SE of their orig. pt of contact.

The image of the u. aerial object on the gun camera film was fuzzy andindistinct, but yet it served to corrob the descrip a rd bril . metallic appear-target, given by thepilots. one of the pilots made a gun camera run on theob. he rec. a weak electron return on his gun sight. he esti. the ob. to e betw. 12000 and 25000 feet above him.

WPA FB is sche to rel. rawinsonde balloons at 0300Z-0900Z, 1500Z, and 2100Z daily. the weath st. repots that on 1 aug. 1952 it launched the sked 1500 Z raw. balloon at 1450 Z (which wouldbe 0950 EST) From all the facts rec. by the ATIC it is concluded that the ob. that appeared on the radar scope was a local jet aircraft in the same vic. as the w. balloon and the visual s. by the fighter pilot was prob caused by the same raw. balloon.

We hope that this info will be of help to you and subst. proof of your s. andtheone reported tous being thesame object. Your gen interest is grtly apprec. b the A.F.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Brown,
Major USAF,
Air Adj Gen.

2d page, data on C$_o$ffman-- Bellefontaine case.

Original of letter DD OPI, sent to C$^{\smile}$ffman.

DD OPI letterhead.

Aprill 22 1953

Mr. H. R. C$^{\smile}$ffman, LL co. etc. Mad. ohio

Dear Mr. C:

I$^{\frown}$ reply tour ltr of Ap 17 req a copy of a prss rel. concerning s. of ānu. f. o. at Dayton on aug 1 1952, we do not belive a formal press rel. was ever made.

however, this is briefly what occurred. at 1551 Z on Aug. 1 1952, radar picked up an obj tr l at 450 knots (grd speed) on heading of 240 deg. Two airb f-86s were vectored, on the object after which time radar cont. was lost. The f 86 pilots attempt. to photogr the object but were unable toclose in efore lack of fuel forced them to return and land. The deveb. photogs were fuzzy and indist but did prove that the pilots had seen something.

Shortly before this was a large tan latex weather balloon, of a type measur. up to 70 feet in diam. at extreme altituds, had been rel. from AP AFB. It is not known whether this balloon might have been ~~the sighted~~ the unid. object.

I hope this info will be of help to you.

Signed. Robert C. White
1st lt. USAF
Air Force Desk
Press Branch

--

Letter to DEK.

On frid. aft. aug 1 152. at est time two pm, ob ~~while~~ my twife and I saw a moving air borne objc which could not be ident by either of us. it was vis. for only bout15 secs. From the momemt I saw it ~~was~~ directly overhead, ... See letter. ain

Main points: He heard a ripping sound of a high alt jet caused him tolook. didn8t see jet, but did see white or silver ob moving too fast to be ht. sun shining. sky fairly clear. no illusion. he had dark glasses on. was egg-shaped then. wife thought it was wobbling. it veereed to left and dropped rapidly to lower alt. disc shap, and instability. ; veled off, straightened to de S. became smaller, with distance.

Other people at Reading and Evendale, Ohio, also reported.

On Friday afternoon, August 1st, 1952 at the estimated time of 2 (two) PM, my wife and I saw the moving air born object or light which could not be identified by either of us. It was visible for only about fifteen seconds from the moment I saw it directly overhead until it became too distant to be seen.

The faint rushing sound of a high altitude jet plane prompted me to search the sky for a glimpse. I never saw the jet but something white or silver caught my eye. It was quickly overhead, but traveling far too fast to be the jet I was expecting to see. (Assuming the object was at the altitude of which the jet plane sounded). It could be no illusion.

The sun was shining, the sky fairly clear, the surface winds were practically still and I had dark glasses on. I said "Look!" and pointed. My wife standing next to me saw it immediately but by this time it was at about 80°

tip of a pencil held at arms length.

You would not be receiving this report were it not for the fact that (according to a local TV NEWS CAST) other people at Reading and Evendale Ohio reported seeing a similar object that same day. There is roughly four-six miles distance between these points and our location.

I may have some interesting questions?

(1) ~~Did those people see the same type of object [illegible] as you saw the same flight pattern of the object was very high.~~

(2) ~~Was that really a jet plane~~ object itself. ~~or did it fly the~~ object then its velocity ~~component~~ ~~towards me was~~ the speed of sound for I looked ~~up in time~~ to see it directly overhead.

(3) ~~How slow could an aerodynamic body~~ ~~have to travel that~~ ~~their air splitting sound. [illegible]~~ ~~no propeller sound.~~

(3) Was a jet that observing the object that day in the Sharonville region. If so could give the altitude I could estimate speed with a fair degree accuracy. ~~of perhaps a~~

UFO

RFD 1, Clarksville, Ohio Nov 17th, 1954

Clairmont Drug

N. R. Coffman

Dear Sir:

On Friday, August 1st, 1952 my wife and I heard a faint ripple of sound and spotted a fast moving, milk-white, disc shaped, object moving due north from the Cincinnati area. (IT PASSED DIRECTLY OVER-HEAD) On August 4th a letter was sent to ATIC Dayton. I received, filled out and returned the subsequent UFO questionaire.

About five months later I learned of the two jets vectored on an object at Dayton, August 1st 1952. To any analysis a very marked similarity and time element existed between the two sightings.

Letters to ATIC Dayton and the press desk in Washington, DC brought forth fairly descriptive answers as to the Dayton sighting. No mention of object motion or Conclusion - Unknown but rather an inference that the object was a weather balloon.

I feel that you may be interested in this partial corraboration of the august 1st 1952 Incident. They did not ~~~~ inform you that they received a definite report from the Cincinnati area.

They may have felt that the report was:

(1) Too near exact

OR (2) From a Crackpot

Since we are both intensely interested in this subject, particularly as to the possibility of an interplanetary aspect, I would be pleased to send you the following items:

(A) The <u>original</u> rough draft of the letter to ATIC written August 4TH, 1952

(B) Carbon copy of letter to ATIC & Washington seeking information on Dayton incident

(C) answer from ATIC (original)

(D) answer from Washington (original)

(E) a few comments on this material (rate portions of this material may be used for publication, if desired but I would like to have the originals

returned to me.)

I would like to be assured of your interest in this matter and your correct mailing address.

Yours very truly
Harold Coffman
RR #1 DEERFIELD RD
SHARONVILLE, OHIO
(10 miles north of
Cincinnati, Ohio)

A

1952, AUGUST 1

BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO
(SHARONVILLE)

DECEMBER 1ST, 1954

Dear Mr Keyhoe,

My wife and I are happy to have your interest in the material which we hope will throw some light on the August 1ST, 1952 (Bellefontain) incident.

The following items are submitted

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	DATE WRITTEN
(1)	Original, rough draft of first letter to ATIC describing the sighting august 1ST 1952	AUGUST 3RD OR 4TH, 1952
(2)	Carbon, Letter to ATIC Dayton and Press Branch USAF, Washington seeking info on jet intercept August 1ST, 1952	MARCH 24TH 53 & APRIL 17TH, 53
(3)	Original, answer from ATIC Dayton	APRIL 13TH, 1953
(4)	Original, answer from Washington Press Branch	APRIL 22ND, 1953

NOTE... The ATIC answer to letter, item (1) above consisted of request to fill out sighting form and brief thank-you paragraph. These forms were filled out and returned. Below is the pertinent data and estimates given on the forms:

DATE OF SIGHTING.... August 1ST 1952
ESTIMATED TIME .... 2 PM (GUESS) ± 4 HOURS
WEATHER ... WARM, SUN SHINING, NO WIND,
BLUE SKY SLIGHT MOISTURE HAZE,
FEW IF ANY THIN CLOUDS
WITNESSES .... Myself and wife

B

SIGHTING POINT.... Sharonville area (about 15 miles north of Cincinnati center.)

OBJECT.... Milk white, disc shaped, thin, egg shaped outline at about 60° above horizon, long axis in direction of flight.

SIZE .... 12 TO 25' DIA. (very rough estimate)

HEIGHT... 1000 - 2000' " " "

SPEED.... 200 - 300 MPH " " "

COURSE... Heading due north and holding straight away approximate 5° climb for going away course (last). NOTE.... It is quite a coincident that this object was last seen heading very nearly towards Dayton, but unfortunately we did not take particular note of the time of sighting.... It could well have been in the morning. The 2 PM estimate on the original rough draft was only a guess at the time the letter was written. ATIC forms also have this time identified as "guess."

Jog and dive in course made abruptly and with no significant turning radius as would be required for large plane or high wing loaded high speed missile. Seemed to rock slightly 2-3 times at instant of first change in course.

First seen (out of corner of eye) directly overhead as silvery streak. It was at about 60-90 degrees above horizon by the time I could get my eyes centered to

C

get a good look.... was looking south for object making thin ripple of sound not unlike light altitude jet but not so deep (no roar; more like ripple of overhead artillery shell)... very faint sound ... could only be heard due to lack of wind and quiet surroundings. Sound heard about 10 seconds before sighting and gradually died out.... at instant of sighting there was no sound; this is unusual because, at this point, object was closest and sound intensity should have been about maximum. This would seem to indicate one of three possibilities:

1. Object accelerating, then coasting
2. Object decelerating, speed slower
3. Directional aspect to sound from object.... mostly forward and such as might be exhibited by forward sensoring loudspeaker, for example.

I wish to bear out that this object was distinct, sharp, clear cut outline, nothing nebulous. However, no details could be seen; just milk white color. This was no electrical phenomena, no fringe effects. It was fast but not too fast to get a good direct look at the object.

reaffirm 450 KNOT speed of object... Did they break contact or did object speed off.... Can't pilots identify rawinsonde balloons by some characteristic (color etc).... Why didn't they inform you that they also had a similar ballons sighting report from Jamesville, Ohio!... Will a rawinsonde balloon give a weak radar gunsight blip at this altitude when mag just fills telescopic gun sight.... Could you secure names of Bellefontain witnesses to enable a discreet check on their sighting.

(4) No comment.

It is felt that the august 1st object was not a military missile for the following reasons:

(1) Secret missle would not be flown over heavily populated area of south west Ohio.

(2) Military missle would no doubt hold level straight course; no jogs and dives for no apparent reasons.

(3) Silent propulsion highly unlikely at this stage of technical advancement.

(4) admission of jet intercept the same day would tend to disclose fact that secret object was in the area.

Looking forward to yours comments,

I am

Yours truly
Harold R. Coffman
R.R. #1 DEERFIELD RD
Jamesville, Ohio

D

REFER TO ITEM

COMMENTS ON ITEMS SUBMITTED

(1) Final draft to ATIC was similar to rough draft (1) except for questions posed. News cast was radio instead of TV... News room did not get number of man from reading so I cannot tell you what he saw. Evendale sighting made by four men at G.E. jet engine plant. Time about 5 PM moving east to west, fast, high, covered momentarily over G.E. Seemed to be surrounded by halo effect of multi color rainbow. NOTE... I thought they might have witnessed a rainbow refraction effect due to water-alcohol augmentation of jet engines. They were not too distant from the exhaust stacks shooting these gases skyward. Subsequent questioning of two of the witnesses seems to eliminate my initial idea. The object was seen to move thru a large arc of sky... it disappeared as a spot... it seemed to be a distinct object not altogether nebulous. Perhaps I can secure contact with these two men, Kidd and Staley, for you.

(2) Written on company letterhead to carry more weight

(3) Very detailed account... apparent conclusions and details not in complete agreement with your information. Questions... Did pilots

1952, August 1

~~1952, Aug 1~~
Ohio

2 Jet Pilots See Object

DAYTON, Ohio, Aug. 1 (AP).—Jet interceptor pilots reported to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base officials today that they saw an object in the sky which they did not think was a light reflection.

It was the first time pilots checking on flying saucer reports here had made such a positive statement.

The two interceptors were sent up about 1:45 a. m. after the Air Force base had received five or six reports of "flying saucers."

They told officers they went up about 17,000 feet and for about ten seconds watched a bright object which hovered above them. It then disappeared at "a high rate of speed."

"We deliberately maneuvered around to make sure it wasn't a light reflection. At first it appeared red and white and then white only," they said.

The pilots, attached to the 97th Fighter Wing, were Maj James B. Smith, and 1st Lt Donald J. Hemer, recently transferred from O'Hare Air Force Base, Park Ridge, Ill.

The Air Technical Intelligence Center, in charge of "flying-saucer" investigations, immediately ordered the two pilots to stop commenting further on their experiences and ordered a ban on pictures of the two.

In the report to Capt E. J. Ruppelt, in charge of "flying-saucer" studies, the two pilots said they were unable to estimate the object's location because "it was dark and there was nothing to compare it with."

Although the official report said the pilots observed the object for about ten seconds, that probably referred to the brief time they got a good look at it.

One of the pilots reported: "I don't think the light was a reflection. I deliberately maneuvered around it at several angles to make sure it wasn't a light reflection. If it had been, there would have been a change."

Make Positive Statement

DAYTON, Ohio, Aug. 1 (AP)—Reports by jet interceptor pilots today marked the first time pilots checking on flying saucer reports here had made such a positive statement.

The two interceptors were sent up about 1:45 A. M., Eastern standard time, after the Air Force base had received five or six reports of "flying saucers."

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1952 AUG. 1 OHIO

Syracuse Herald-Journal, August 1, 1952

Dayton, Oh. (AP)-- Jet interceptor pilots reported to Wright-Patterson AFB officials today that they saw an object in the sky which they didn't think was a light reflection. It was the first time pilots checking on flying saucers reports here had made such a positive statement. The two interceptors were sent up about 2:45 a.m. after the AFB had received 5 or 6 reports of flying saucers. They told officers they went up to 17,000 feet and for about 10 seconds watched a white and red object that hovered above them. It then disappeared at "a high rate of speed. We deliberately manoeuvered around to make sure it wasn't a light reflection. At first it appeared red and white and then white only."

1952 AUG. 1 OHIO

Dayton, Ohio, ~~XXX~~ August 1, 1952 AI-D-29

Dayton, Aug. 1 (INS)— A strange glow was sighted in the sky between Dayton and Columbus early today and chased by two jet fighters operating out of headquarters of the Air Force "flying saucer" research center.

The Public Information ~~XXXX~~ Office at Dayton's W-P AFB said the nocturnal saucer hunt came to an abrupt end when the mysterious, speeding light vanished in mid-air.

The night was clear and moonless and one pursuing pilot said he was certain that the glow was no reflection.

The jet fighters were sent up after a number of people reported a strange glow in the sky toward Columbus to the Air Material Command.

Two fighters pilots took off and reported a "sighting" at 1:45 a.m. They said the light was traveling "very fast" and was in view for about ten seconds while they chased it.

The pilots said the object was "too far off" to get a clear view. One flier reported that he maneuvered his craft into several different positions and determined that the object was not a reflection of some sort.

Wright Field is the AF's ATIC where reports on saucers come in from all over the nation.

In this case the public information office said it was definitely known that none of the weather balloons periodically sent up by the base were in the area of the "sighting."

NY Times Aug 2, 52

Make Positive Statement

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1952 AUG. 1 OHIO

Jet Flyers Seeking Saucers Report Seeing 'Swift Object'

By the Associated Press 1952

DAYTON, Ohio, Aug. 1.—Jet interceptor pilots reported to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base officials today that they saw an object in the sky which they didn't think was a light reflection.

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"We deliberately maneuvered around to make sure it wasn't a light reflection. At first it appeared red and white and then white only," they said.

The Coast Guard contributed its bit to the "flying saucer" controversy today by releasing a photograph of four bright objects taken in broad daylight.

The service made no attempt to define the objects. In fact, it appeared just as skeptical as the Air Force, which is studying the print, along with hundreds of other reports of aerial fantasia.

The picture was taken at 9:35 a.m. on July 16 by Coast Guardsman Shell R. Alpert, 21, who was cleaning a camera in the Salem (Mass.) Air Station photo laboratory.

Gazing out the window, he saw four bright lights in the sky. As he focused the camera, the lights wavered and died down. He ran to a nearby sick bay and returned with Thomas Flaherty, 26. The lights flashed again, and Seaman Alpert snapped them. Then they died out altogether.

The Coast Guard apparently was glad to forget the whole thing.

Incidentally, radar observers reported "all clear" over Washington last night.

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA
1536 Connecticut Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Director: Maj. Donald E. Keyhoe, USMC (Ret.)

Biographical Data on Major Keyhoe

Major Keyhoe is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Marine Corps Officers School, and the Naval Aviation Training Station, Pensacola, Florida. After serving as a Marine aircraft and balloon pilot, he was injured in a night flight at Guam. Subsequently, he served as Chief of Information, Civil Aeronautics, Department of Commerce; manager of the Admiral Byrd North Pole plane tour of the U.S.; and Aide to Col. Charles A. Lindbergh on his flying tour of the United States. During World War II, he served with the Naval Aviation Training Division.

As a writer on aviation, espionage, Unidentified Flying Objects and other subjects, Major Keyhoe has contributed to the National Geographic, Saturday Evening Post, Cosmopolitan, Redbook, True, This Week, the American Weekly, and other magazines. He is the author of Flying With Lindbergh; M-Day — What Your Government Plans for You; Flying Saucers Are Real; Flying Saucers From Outer Space; The Flying Saucer Conspiracy; and Flying Saucers: Top Secret.

At present, Major Keyhoe is serving as Director of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, Washington, D.C., a non-profit organization covering all 50 states and 30 foreign countries. Through its scientific and technical consultants, in the U.S. and abroad, NICAP investigates worldwide reports of UFOs, evaluates all verified sightings, and reports its findings to its members (currently numbering about 10,000), to Congress and the press.

Using the best documented evidence on record, Major Keyhoe has lectured extensively on UFOs and has also broadcast several hundred TV and radio programs on the same subject.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Hoax or Horror?

To THE military and the public who weren't intimately associated with the higher levels of Air Force Intelligence during the summer of 1952—and few were—General Samford's press conference seemed to indicate the peak in official interest in flying saucers. It did take the pressure off Project Blue Book—reports dropped from fifty per day to ten a day inside of a week—but behind the scenes the press conference was only the signal for an all-out drive to find out more about the UFO. Work on the special cameras continued on a high-priority basis, and General Samford directed us to enlist the aid of top-ranking scientists.

During the past four months we had collected some 750 comparatively well-documented reports, and we hoped that something in these reports might give us a good lead on the UFO. My orders were to tell the scientists to whom we talked that the Air Force was officially still very much interested in the UFO and that their assistance, even if it was only in giving us ideas and comments on the reports, was badly needed. Although the statement of the problem was worded much more loosely, in essence it was, "Do the UFO reports we have collected indicate that the earth is being visited by a people from another planet?"

Such questions had been asked of the scientists before, but not in such a serious vein.

Then a secondary program was to be started, one of "educating" the military. The old idea that UFO reports would die out when the thrill wore off had long been discarded. We all knew that UFO reports would continue to come in and that in order to properly evaluate them we had

to have every shred of evidence. The Big Flap had shown us that our chances of getting a definite answer on a sighting was directly proportional to the quality of the information we received from the intelligence officers in the field.

But soon after the press conference we began to get wires from intelligence officers saying they had interpreted the newspaper accounts of General Samford's press conference to mean that we were no longer interested in UFO reports. A few other intelligence officers had evidently also misinterpreted the general's remarks because their reports of excellent sightings were sloppy and incomplete. All of this was bad, so to forestall any misconceived ideas about the future of the Air Force's UFO project, summaries of General Samford's press conference were distributed to intelligence officers. General Samford had outlined the future of the UFO project when he'd said:

"So our present course of action is to continue on this problem with the best of our ability, giving it the attention that we feel it very definitely warrants. We will give it adequate attention, but not frantic attention."

The summary of the press conference straighted things out to some extent and our flow of reports got back to normal.

I was anxious to start enlisting the aid of scientists, as General Samford had directed, but before this could be done we had a backlog of UFO reports that had to be evaluated. During July we had been swamped and had picked off only the best ones. Some of the reports we were working on during August had simple answers, but many were unknowns. There was one report that was of special interest because it was an excellent example of how a UFO report can at first appear to be absolutely insoluble then suddenly fall apart under thorough investigation. It also points up the fact that our investigation and analysis were thorough and that when we finally stamped a report "Unknown" it was unknown. We weren't infallible but we didn't often let a clue slip by.

At exactly ten forty-five on the morning of August 1, 1952, an ADC radar near Bellefontaine, Ohio, picked up a high-speed unidentified target moving southwest, just north of

Dayton. Two F-86's from the 97th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Wright-Patterson were scrambled and in a few minutes they were climbing out toward where the radar showed the UFO to be. The radar didn't have any height-finding equipment so all that the ground controller at the radar site could do was to get the two F-86's over or under the target, and then they would have to find it visually.

When the two airplanes reached 30,000 feet, the ground controller called them and told them that they were almost on the target, which was still continuing its southwesterly course at about 525 miles an hour. In a few seconds the ground controller called back and told the lead pilot that the targets of his airplane and the UFO had blended on the radarscope and that the pilot would have to make a visual search; this was as close in as radar could get him. Then the radar broke down and went off the air.

But at almost that exact second the lead pilot looked up and there in the clear blue sky several thousand feet above him was a silver-colored sphere. The lead pilot pointed it out to his wing man and both of them started to climb. They went to their maximum altitude but they couldn't reach the UFO. After ten minutes of unsuccessful attempts to identify the huge silver sphere or disk—because at times it looked like a disk—one of the pilots hauled the nose of his F-86 up in a stall and exposed several feet of gun camera film. Just as he did this the warning light on his radar gun sight blinked on, indicating that something solid was in front of him—he wasn't photographing a sundog, hallucination, or refracted light.

The two pilots broke off the intercept and started back to Wright-Patterson when they suddenly realized that they were still northwest of the base, in almost the same location they had been when they started the intercept ten minutes before. The UFO had evidently slowed down from the speed that the radar had measured, 525 miles an hour, until it was hovering almost completely motionless.

As soon as the pilots were on the ground, the magazine of film from the gun camera was rushed to the photo lab and developed. The photos showed only a round, indistinct blob

—no details—but they were proof that some type of unidentified object had been in the air north of Dayton.

Lieutenant Andy Flues was assigned to this one. He checked the locations of balloons and found out that a 20-foot-diameter radiosonde weather balloon from Wright-Patterson had been very near the area when the unsuccessful intercept took place, but the balloon wasn't traveling 525 miles an hour and it couldn't be picked up by the ground radar, so he investigated further. The UFO couldn't have been another airplane because airplanes don't hover in one spot and it was no atmospheric phenomenon. Andy wrote it off as an unknown but it still bothered him; that balloon in the area was mighty suspicious. He talked to the two pilots a half dozen times and spent a day at the radar site at Bellefontaine before he reversed his "Unknown" decision and came up with the answer.

The unidentified target that the radar had tracked across Ohio was a low-flying jet. The jet was unidentified because there was a mix-up and the radar station didn't get its flight plan. Andy checked and found that a jet out of Cleveland had landed at Memphis at about eleven-forty. At ten forty-five this jet would have been north of Dayton on a southwesterly heading. When the ground controller blended the targets of the two F-86's into the unidentified target, they were at 30,000 feet and were looking for the target at their altitude or higher so they missed the low-flying jet—but they did see the balloon. Since the radar went out just as the pilots saw the balloon, the ground controller couldn't see that the unidentified target he'd been watching was continuing on to the southwest. The pilots didn't bother to look around any more once they'd spotted the balloon because they thought they had the target in sight.

The only part of the sighting that still wasn't explained was the radar pickup on the F-86's gun sight. Lieutenant Flues checked around, did a little experimenting, and found out that the small transmitter box on a radiosonde balloon will give an indication on the radar used in F-86 gun sights.

To get a final bit of proof, Lieutenant Flues took the gun camera photos to the photo lab. The two F-86's had been at

about 40,000 feet when the photos were taken and the 20-foot balloon was at about 70,000 feet. Andy's question to the photo lab was, "How big should a 20-foot balloon appear on a frame of 16-mm. movie film when the balloon is 30,000 feet away?"

The people in the photo lab made a few calculations and measurements and came up with the answer. "A 20-foot balloon photographed from 30,000 feet away would be the same size as the UFO in the gun camera photos."

By the middle of August, Project Blue Book was back to normal. Lieutenant Flues's Coca-Cola consumption had dropped from twenty bottles a day in mid-July to his normal five. We were all getting a good night's sleep and it was now a rare occasion when my home telephone would ring in the middle of the night to report a new UFO.

But then on the morning of August 20 I was happily taking a shower, getting ready to go to work, when one of these rare occasions occurred and the phone rang—it was the ATIC OD. An operational immediate wire had just come in for Blue Book. He had gone over to the message center and gotten it. He thought that it was important and wanted me to come right out. For some reason he didn't want to read it over the phone, although it was not classified. I should come out, so I left in a hurry.

The wire was from the intelligence officer at an air base in Florida. The previous night a scoutmaster and three boy scouts had seen a UFO. The scoutmaster had been burned when he approached too close to the UFO. The wire went on to give a few sketchy details and state that the scoutmaster was a "solid citizen."

I immediately put in a long-distance call to the intelligence officer. He confirmed the data in the wire. He had talked briefly to the scoutmaster on the phone and from all he could gather it was no hoax. The local police had been contacted and they verified the story and the fact of the burns. I asked the intelligence officer to contact the scoutmaster and ask if he would submit to a physical examination immediately. I could imagine the rumors that could start about the scoutmaster's condition, and I wanted proof. The report sounded good, so I told the intelligence officer I'd get down to see him as soon as possible.

I immediately called Colonel Dunn, then chief at ATIC, and gave him a brief rundown. He agreed that I should go down to Florida as soon as possible and offered to try to get an Air Force B-25, which would save time over the airlines.

I told Bob Olsson to borrow a Geiger counter at Wright Field, then check out a camera. I called my wife and asked her to pack a few clothes and bring them out to me. Bob got the equipment, ran home and packed a bag, and in two hours he and I and our two pilots, Captain Bill Hoey and Captain David Douglas, were on our way to Florida to investigate one of the weirdest UFO reports that I came up against.

When we arrived, the intelligence officer arranged for the scoutmaster to come out to the air base. The latter knew we were coming, so he arrived at the base in a few minutes. He was a very pleasant chap, in his early thirties, not at all talkative but apparently willing to co-operate.

While he was giving us a brief personal history, I had the immediate impression that he was telling the truth. He'd lived in Florida all of his life. He'd gone to a private military prep school, had some college, and then had joined the Marines. He told us that he had been in the Pacific most of the war and repeated some rather hairy stories of what he'd been through. After the war he'd worked as an auto mechanic, then gone to Georgia for a while to work in a turpentine plant. After returning to Florida, he opened a gas station, but some hard luck had forced him to sell out. He was now working as a clerk in a hardware store. Some months back a local church had decided to organize a boy scout troop and he had offered to be the scoutmaster.

On the night before the weekly scout meeting had broken up early. He said that he had offered to give four of the boys a ride home. He had let one of the boys out when the conversation turned to a stock car race that was to take place soon. They talked about the condition of the track. It had been raining frequently, and they wondered if the track