

Thomson Page

Lakenheath UFOs case

JAN 2 1974

18639 POINT LOOKOUT DRIVE
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77058

28 Dec 1973

Col. Raymond F. Toliver, USAF (Ret)

5286 Lindley Ave
Encino, Calif. 91316

Dear Col. Toliver:

I am told that you and Col. McCrary were stationed at Wetherfield at the end of World War II and witnessed the extraordinary Lakenheath UFO's which were tracked by several radars, seen visually, and chased by RAF fighters. As you may know, that case has never been explained satisfactorily; it is highlighted in my book: "UFO's, A Scientific Debate", published by Cornell Univ. Press early this year.

One of your fighter-pilot friends who read the book suggested that I write you for any additional information you might provide. Actually, Carl Sagan and I, who organized and edited the book, are now busy with the NASA space effort, and are not as involved with the analysis of UFO reports as some of our contributors. So, if you are interested in adding data to the Lakenheath case, I hope you will write to Allen Hynek, who is the leading UFO analyst in the U.S. His address is:

Prof. J. Allen Hynek
Dept. of Astronomy
Northwestern Univ.
Evanston, Ill. 60201

Sincerely -

Thomson Page

cc: Carl Sagan

→ Allen Hynek - Hope you don't get comet-UFO sightings, next week:

W. Col. James McCrary, USAF
Box 448
DeKalb, Tex. 75559

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Lakenheath

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: (C) Evaluation of Lakenheath Reports

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1. The original Lakenheath reports and the preliminary evaluations made by ATIC were submitted to the undersigned for examination, evaluation and comment. Writer requested permission to discuss these with Dr. F. L. Whipple, Harvard University, and director of Smithsonian Astronomical Observatory, in view of the fact that sightings occurred at the time of Perseid meteors and Dr. Whipple is a world-recognized authority on meteors. Following comments will accordingly be invited to cover the three points separately.

2. It is to be regretted that so unusual a sighting report did not contain more factual material on which to base an evaluation. The Lakenheath report is one of the more unusual JFO reports, involving electronic and visual observations and subsequent pursuit by fighter plane. Yet, report does not state whether it was definitely established that visual and electronic sightings referred to same object, or even if they occurred precisely simultaneously. Further, report does not give exact weather information which might enable one to charge weather conditions, with any precision relative to "anomalous propagation" such as frequently occurs with radars.

3. It would be of extreme value to have independent statements from the various observers both at Bentwaters and Lakenheath. Report states that observers were traffic controllers and intelligence specialists. An analyst would be greatly aided by having independent statements from such highly trained observers, as the original report indicates the observers were.

4. The implication of the original report is that the objects were sighted simultaneously by ground-visual, air-electronic and ground-electronic means. Yet, report nowhere states stellar magnitude of visual sightings or nature of radar blips. Angular rate of motion of objects is likewise not included.

any 5. With the above in mind, the preliminary reports submitted by Capt. Gregory covers the case as well as it possibly could, under the circumstances. The present writer, upon more detailed examination of the report, and accepting the implications of the original report in the absence of specific statements, is led to differ somewhat from preliminary report. It seems highly unlikely, for instance, that the Perseid meteors could have been the cause of the sightings, especially in view of the statement of observers that shooting stars were exceptionally numerous that evening, thus implying that they were able to distinguish the two phenomena. Further, if new credence can be given to the maneuvers of the objects as sighted visually and by radar, the meteor hypothesis must be ruled out.

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SUBJECT: (C) Evaluation of Lakenheath Reports (Cont)

6. Meteors, however, as pointed out by Capt Gregory, can lead to radar returns because of the ionization of the gases in their trail. Accordingly, it would be extremely important to know whether the Bentwaters and Lakenheath radars have ever in the past observed meteors on their scopes and, if so, how such returns differ from the blips reported here.

7. Dr. Whipple and the writer discussed the Lakenheath incident at length and Dr. Whipple pointed out immediately the statement that "radars reported these facts to occur at later hours than the ground observers". This statement needs clarification inasmuch as it contradicts other portions of the report which indicate that at least at certain times visual and radar sightings were simultaneously.

8. Dr. Whipple stated that as far as the report at hand is concerned, no obvious physical solution is suggested. He deplored the inadequacy of the typical UFO report as a scientific document. He further stated that the nature of such reports is not likely to change and urged that if the Air Force was as serious in its attempts to resolve this problem, both scientifically and in the public mind, that the Air Force do more than continue its passive investigational attitudes. He suggested that, as in any scientific procedure, facts are the raw material from which one must work and that in general the investigator in any particular case must assume an active roll in the obtaining of scientific data. In short, Dr. Whipple asked the writer whether the Air Force had ever considered or was now considering the possibility of initiating, for a limited time, an actual sky patrol by photographic and visual means of precisely those areas from which the maximum UFO reports originate. The writer responded that this had indeed been suggested in the past but that because of considerations of expenses and of possible public misinterpretation, it was abandoned.

9. Dr. Whipple urged that a more modest proposal of the same general type be considered at this time. For instance, an area from which numerous reports have come in might be patrolled by a dozen or so "fish eye" cameras, operating automatically, which would give a total record of all bright moving objects at night within a given area or sector. A simple timing device would suffice to yield the angular rate of objects motion so that fire balls (bright meteors) could be distinguished from airplanes and from other astronomical objects.

10. The present writer submits that it might be of considerable, potential use to the Air Force to be able to state, at some future time, that a careful patrol of an area "rich in UFO reports" had been patrolled and nothing of a mysterious character photographed. This would be especially true if, during the time of patrol, UFO reports from untrained observers continued to come in from that area.

11. The Lakenheath report could constitute a source of embarrassment to the Air Force, and should the facts, as so far reported, get into the public domain, it is not necessary to point out what excellent use the several dozen

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SUBJECT: (C) Evaluation of Lakenheath Reports (Cont)

UFO societies^{ies} and other "publicity artists" would make of such an incident. It is, therefore, of great importance that further information on the technical aspects of the original observations be obtained, without loss of time from the original observers.

J. Allen Hynek

Dr. J. Allen Hynek
Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
USAF UFO Scientist-Consultant
17 October 1956

13 OCT 20 1956

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3V13 (1)
Lakenheath Report.

(radar) at 22 55 Z, 13 Aug. 1956
Bentwaters (U.S.A) sighted object 30
miles east of station, travelling
westerly at 2000 - 4000 mph.

Object disappeared on scope
2 miles east of station and
immediately appeared on scope 3
miles west of station, where it
disappeared 30 miles west of
station on scope. [Compute time?]

Tower personnel at Bentwaters
reported to GCA that a bright
light passed over the field east to
west at terrific speeds and at
about 4000 ft. altitude.
[at same time?]

At the same time pilot in
aircraft at 4000 ft. alt.
over Bentwaters reported a
bright light streaked under
his aircraft travelling east to
west at terrific speed.

At this time Bentwaters GCA checked with RAF station Jakenheath GCA to determine if unusual sightings were occurring.

Jakenheath GCA alerted 60th AAA, (stationed at Jakenheath), and Sculthorpe GCA to watch for unusual targets.

Following info is the observations made by this (?) [Jakenheath?] station radar, tower and ground personnel placed in format required by AFR 700-2.

1. a Round white light

b One observer from ground stated on first observation object was about size of golf ball; as object continued on flight it became a "pin point."

c. Color was white.

d. Two from ground observation; undetermined number of blips appearing and disappearing on radar scopes.

e. No formation as far as radar sightings were concerned. Crowd observer stated one white light joined up with another and both disappeared in formation together.

f. No features or details other than the white light.

g. No tail, trail or exhaust

h. No sound

i. Objects as seen by ground observers and GCA radar had feature of traveling at terrific speeds and then

stopping and changing course immediately.

2.

a. Ground observer looked at sky and saw the object RAF station Fakenhead GCA was alerted by Bentwaters GCA to be on lookout for unusual targets.

b. Ground observer estimate objects were 20-2500 ft altitude and were on a S.W. heading. Object stopped and immediately assumed an easterly heading.

RAF station Fakenhead GCA and air traffic control center reports radar tracking from 6 miles west to about 20 miles S.W. where target stopped and assumed a stationary position for 5 minutes.

Target then assumed a heading northwesterly into the station and stopped two miles NW of station

Further GCA reports 3 to 4 additional targets were doing the same maneuvers in the vicinity of this station.

Thus two radar sets and 3 ground observers report substantially the same things.

Radars reported these facts to occur at later hours than the ground observers.

Ground observers report no change in altitude with objects disappearing on an easterly heading.

Radar sets stated no definite disappearance factor other than target

disappeared from scopes at approximately Aug. 14 0330 Z.
[Then in sight about 4 1/2 hours] [22 55 Aug. 13]

d. Flight path was straight but jerky with object stopping instantly and then continuing. Maneuvers were of same pattern except ^(how-radar?) one object was observed to "lock on" to fighters scrambled by RAF, and followed all maneuvers of the jet fighters.

In addition, taken back RATCC observed object 17 miles east of station making sharp rectangular course of flight.

This maneuver was not conducted by circular path but on right angles at speeds 4PPA1PP mph.

Object would stop and start with amazing rapidity

e. Objects simply disappeared.

f. Objects were observed intermittently - by RAF station Fakenhead radar from Aug. 14 0010 Z to 0330 Z

3. Manner of observation

- a. ground - visual
- air - electronic
- ground - electronic

Ground electronic equipment was TS-1D, CPS 5, and CPN 4
 Air-electronic was A-I equipment in British jet a/c. Type of aircraft scrambled, Venom.

b. No optical aids used.

c. Venom.

4. Time and Date of Sighting

a. Aug. 14 0010 Z to ~~0330~~ 0330 Z.

b. Night - sky clear and minimum of clouds - moonlight.

- Observer: " Radar air traffic control center team supervisor - reliable.
2. Lakehurst RATTCC controller. rel.
 3. Asst. controller.
 4. Intelligence specialist, 307th bomb wing - very reliable
 5. another intelligence specialist.
 6. " " "
 7. " " "

7. Weather and winds - aloft.

- a. clear sky until 0300 z. shortly thereafter scattered clouds at 3500 ft.

b. From midnight until 0600 surface wind was 230 deg 15 knots

6000 ft	290°	24 k.
10000	"	35 k.
16,000	"	45 "
20,000	"	53 "
30,000	"	62 "
50,000	"	75 "

- c. Ceiling unlimited
 d. Visibility from 0001Z to 400Z was 10 nautical miles.
 e. $\frac{1}{10}$ of sky covered at 0300Z.

8. Ground observers report unusual number of shooting stars in sky. Further state the objects seen were definitely not shooting stars, as there were no trails behind as are usual.

9. Interception was undertaken by one British jet fighter on alert by 60th AAA sector control. Aircraft is believed to have been a Venom. The a/c flew over Fakenhead and was vectored toward a target on radar 6 miles east of the field.

Pilot advised he had a bright white light in sight and would investigate.
 At 13 miles west he

(10)

reported loss of target and white light.

Lakenheath RATCC vectored him to a target 10 miles east of Lakenheath and pilot advised target was on radar and he was "locking on".

Pilot reported he had lost target on his radar.

Lakenheath RATCC reports that as the Venom passed the target on radar, the target began a tail chase of the friendly fighter.

RATCC requested pilot acknowledge this chase. Pilot acknowledged and stated he would try to circle and get behind the target.

Pilot advised he was unable to "shake" the target off his tail and requested

assistance.

One additional venom was scrambled from RAF station.

Original pilot stated, "Closest target I have ever seen on radar."

Target disappeared and second aircraft did not establish contact.

First a/c returned to home station due to being low on fuel.

Second venom was vectored to other radar targets but was unable to make contact.

Shortly second flight returned to home station due to malfunctions. [Scared as hell, no doubt]

No further interception activities were undertaken.

All targets disappeared from scope at approx. 0330 Z.

10. Other a/c in area were properly identified by radar and flight logs as being friendly.

11. All personnel interviewed and logs of RATTCC lend credence to the existence of some unexplainable flying phenomena near this airfield on this occasion.

Controllers are experienced and technical skills were used in attempt to determine just what the objects were.

When the target would stop on the scope.

The MTI was used. However, the target would still appear on the scope.

All ground observers and reports from observers at Bentwaters agree on color, maneuvers and shape of object.

My analysis of the sightings is that they were real and not figments of the imagination.

The fact that 3 radar sets picked up the targets simultaneously is certainly conclusive that a target or object was in the air.

[what about mirrors]

The maneuvers of the objects were extraordinary; however, the fact that radar and ground visual observations were made on its rapid acceleration and abrupt stops certainly lend credence to the report.

It is not believed these sightings had a meteorological or astronomical origin.

No phys. ev. or photographs.

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Lakenheath Report

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At 2255Z, 13 August 1956, Bentwaters (U.S.A.) sighted (radar) object 30 miles east of station, travelling westerly at 2000-4000 mph.

Object disappeared on scope 2 miles east of station and immediately appeared on scope 3 miles west of station, where it disappeared 30 miles west of station on scope (compute time?)

Tower personnel at Bentwaters reported to GCA that a bright light passed over the field east to west at terrific speeds and at about 4000 ft. altitude. (At same time?)

At the same time pilot in aircraft at 4000 ft. altitude over Bentwaters reported a bright light streaked under his aircraft travelling east to west at terrific speed.

At this time Bentwaters GCA checked with RAF station Lakenheath GCA to determine if unusual sightings were occurring.

Lakenheath GCA alerted 60th AAA, (stationed at Lakenheath) and Sculthorpe GCA to watch for unusual targets.

The following information is the observations made by this (?) (Lakenheath?) station radar, tower, and ground personnel placed in format required by AFR 200-2.

1. a. Round white light
 - b. One observer from ground stated on first observation object was about size of golf ball: as object continued on flight it became a 'pin point'.
 - c. Color was white
 - d. Two from ground observation; undetermined number of blips appearing and disappearing on radar scopes.
 - e. No formation as far as radar sightings were concerned.

Ground observers stated one white light joined up with another and both disappeared in formation together.
 - f. No features or details other than the white light.

- g. No tail, trail, or exhaust
- h. No sound
- i. Objects as seen by ground observers and GCA radar had feature of travelling at terrific speeds and then stopping and changing course immediately.
2. a. Ground observers looked at sky and saw the objects.
RAF station Lakenheath GCA was alerted by Bentwaters GCA to be on the lookout for unusual targets.
- b. Ground observers estimate objects were 20-2500 ft. altitude and were on a S.W. heading. Object stopped and immediately assumed an easterly heading.
RAF station Lakenheath GCA and air traffic control center reports radar tracking from 6 miles west to about 20 miles S.W. where target stopped and assumed a stationary position for 5 minutes.
Target then assumed a heading northwesterly into the station and stopped two miles N.W. of station.
Lakenheath GCA reports 3 to 4 additional targets were doing the same maneuvers in the vicinity of this station.
Thus, two radar sets and 3 ground observers report substantially the same things.
- ???
- Radars reported these facts to occur at later hours than the ground observers.
- c. Ground observers report no change in altitude with objects disappearing on an easterly heading.
Radar sets stated no definite disappearance factor other than target disappeared from scopes at approximately August 14 0330Z. (Thus in sight about 4½ hours) (2255 Aug 13)
- d. Flight path was straight but jerky with object stopping instantly and then continuing. Maneuvers were of same pattern except one object was observed (how - radar or?) to "lock on" to fighter scrambled by RAF, and followed all maneuvers of the jet fighter.
In addition, Lakenheath RATCC observed object 17 miles east of station making sharp rectangular course of flight.
This maneuver was not conducted by circular path but on right angles at speeds YPPAIPP mph.
Object would stop and start with amazing rapidity.
-

- e. Objects simply disappeared.
- f. Objects were observed intermittently by RAF station Lakenheath radars from August 14 0010 Z to 0330 Z.

3. Manner of Observation

- a. Ground - visual
Air - electronic
Ground - electronic

Ground electronic equipment was TS-ID, CPS 5, and CPN 4.
Air electronic equipment was A-I equipment in British jet a/c.
Type of aircraft scrambled, Venom.
- b. No optical aids used.
- c. Venom

4. Time and Date of Sighting

- a. August 14 0010Z to 0330Z.
- b. Night - sky clear and minimum of clouds - moonlight.

Observers:

- 1. Radar air traffic control center team supervisor - reliable.
- 2. Lakenheath RATCC controller.- reliable.
- 3. Assistant controller
- 4. Intelligence specialist, 307th bomb wing - very reliable.
- 5. Another intelligence specialist.
- 6. Another intelligence specialist.
- 7. Another intelligence specialist.

5. Weather and Winds - Aloft

- a. Clear sky until 0300Z. Shortly thereafter scattered clouds at 3500 ft.
- b. From midnight until 0600 surface wind was 230 °, 15 knots.

6,000 ft	290 ^o	24 k
10,000	"	35 k
16,000	"	45 K
20,000	"	53 k
30,000	"	62 K
50,000	"	75 k

- c. Ceiling unlimited
- d. Visibility from 0001Z to 400Z was 10 nautical miles.
- e. 1/10 of sky covered at 0300Z.

6. Ground observers report unusual number of shooting stars in sky. Further state the objects seen were definitely not shooting stars, as there were no trails behind.

7. Interception was undertaken by one British jet fighter on alert by 60th AAA section control. Aircraft is believed to have been a Venom. The a/c flew over Lakenheath and was vectored toward a target on radar 6 miles east of the field.

Pilot advised he had a bright white light in sight and would investigate.

At 13 miles west he reported loss of target and white light.

Lakenheath RATCC vectored him to a target 10 miles east of Lakenheath and pilot advised target was on radar and he was "locking on".

Pilot reported he had lost target on his radar.

((Lakenheath RATCC reports that as the Venom passed the target on radar, the target began a tail chase of the friendly fighter.

RATCC requested pilot acknowledge this chase. Pilot acknowledged and stated he would try to circle and get behind the target.

Pilot advised he was unable to "shake" the target off his tail and requested assistance.

One additional Venom was scrambled from RAF station.

Original pilot stated, "Clearest target I have ever seen on radar".

Target disappeared and second aircraft did not establish contact.

First a/c returned to home station due to being low on fuel.

Second Venom was vectored to other radar targets but was unable to make contact.

Shortly, second fighter returned to home station due to malfunctions. ((Scared as hell, no doubt))

No further interception activity was undertaken.

All targets disappeared from scopes at approximately 0330Z.

8. Other a/c in area were properly identified by radar and flight logs as being friendly.

9. All personnel interviewed and logs of RATCC lend reality to the existence of some unexplainable flying phenomena near this airfield on this occasion.

Controllers are experienced and technical skills were used in attempts to determine just what the objects were, when the target would stop on the scope.

The MTI was used. However, the target would still appear on the scope.

All ground observers and reports from observers at Bentwaters agree on color, maneuvers, and shape of object.

"My analysis of the sightings is that they were real and not figments of the imagination.

"The fact that 3 radar sets picked up the targets simultaneously is certainly conclusive that a target or object was in the air (what about inversions).

"The maneuvers of the objects were extraordinary; however, the fact that radar and ground visual observations were made on its rapid accelerations and abrupt stops certainly lend credence to the report.

"It is not believed these sightings had a meteorological or astronomical origin."

No physical evidence or photographs.