PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 22 Jan 52	2. LOCATION HENAMA, ALASKA
3. DATE / GROUP Local 22/0120 AST GMT 22/1020 Z	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION ☐ Ground-Visual ☒ Ground-Radar ☐ Air-Visual ☒ Air-Intercept Radar
5. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	6. SOURCE Varied Military Personnel
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION --	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 1
9. COURSE Varied	

10. CONCLUSIONS

- ☐ Was Balloon
- ☐ Probably Balloon
- ☐ Possible Balloon
- ☐ Was Aircraft
- ☐ Probably Aircraft
- ☐ Possible Aircraft
- ☐ Was Astronomical
- ☐ Probably Astronomical
- ☐ Possible Astronomical
- ☒ Other Unusual atmospheric conditions
- ☐ Insufficient Data for Evaluation
- ☐ Unknown

11. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING

At approximately 1020Z, 22 Jan 52, ground radar site picked up an object traveling at estimated speed of 1350-1500 knots. The radar site lost the object and picked it up again at 1052Z. At 1200Z, F-94 a/c picked up a target and tried to locate it with negative results.

12. COMMENTS

1. Several targets were located the radar scopes but objects were not seen visually.
2. It is believed that the various pick-ups on the radar screens were due to abnormal atmospheric conditions.

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DEC

SECOND CONFIRMATION

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DECL[illegible]

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

HEADQUARTERS
ALASKAN AIR COMMAND
ELMENDORF AIR FORCE BASE
APO 942, U. S. AIR FORCE

AACID-2 [illegible] 52

SUBJECT: Intelligence Investigation Track 17

TO: Commanding Officer
5004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron
Elmendorf Air Force Base
APO 942, U. S. Air Force

1. Reference is made to 5001st [illegible] 3-0103, DTG 22[illegible] January 1952, concerning unidentified Track 17 which was reported by [illegible].

2. This letter confirms verbal instructions and directions to the Commanding Officer of the 5004th to conduct an immediate and complete investigation by sending an intelligence team to [illegible] Base to ascertain the nature scope and factors involved in a study of track 17.

3. Upon completion of this investigation and study, a detailed report (four copies) will be forwarded to this headquarters.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL SMITH:

[illegible]
Major USAF
Asst [illegible]

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

[illegible]
Capt USAF

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APPENDIX VII

Nenana, Alaska - 22 January 1952

I. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

At 1020Z on 22 January 1952, a radar station at Murphy's Dome, Alaska, observed an unidentified radar return. The target was going away from the station on an azimuth of 210°, at a speed of about 1500 mph when first observed but appeared to reverse its direction and returned toward the station. The set was adjusted so that the target could be observed as it closed in on the station but after this change was made the target was again observed, however, at about its original location, and again going away from the station. Just before it faded, it appeared to be making a turn back toward the station.

At 1030Z an F-94 was airborne to search for the object. At this time the object was going away from the station at a high rate of speed so the F-94 was told to orbit. About this time the ground station lost contact with the object but continued to track the F-94.

At about 1100Z as the F-94 was approaching Nenana (near Fairbanks), the radar observer in the F-94 observed two targets, one faint and one bright. The aircraft was at 30,000 ft. and the target was at 25,000 ft. The targets crossed from right to left and appeared to be traveling slowly and as the F-94 approached the target a high rate of closure was indicated. The contact was lost at a range of 200 yards.

Approximately one hour later, again near Nenana, another contact was made by the F-94. In this instance the target was kept dead ahead and level. When the target was at a range of 200 yards, the pilot pulled up and the target was lost. The rate of closure during the run was 100 knots even though the F-94 had flaps down. No other contacts were made and the aircraft was released at 1210Z.

During the two airborne contacts the F-94 was being tracked by the ground station but the object was not being picked up.

The weather was clear but no visual sighting was made. On the same night, the same crew had visually identified a C-54, a C-47, and a small civilian aircraft from 300 to 500 yards. There were no clouds in the sky but it was a dark night.

No malfunctions were found in either radar set.

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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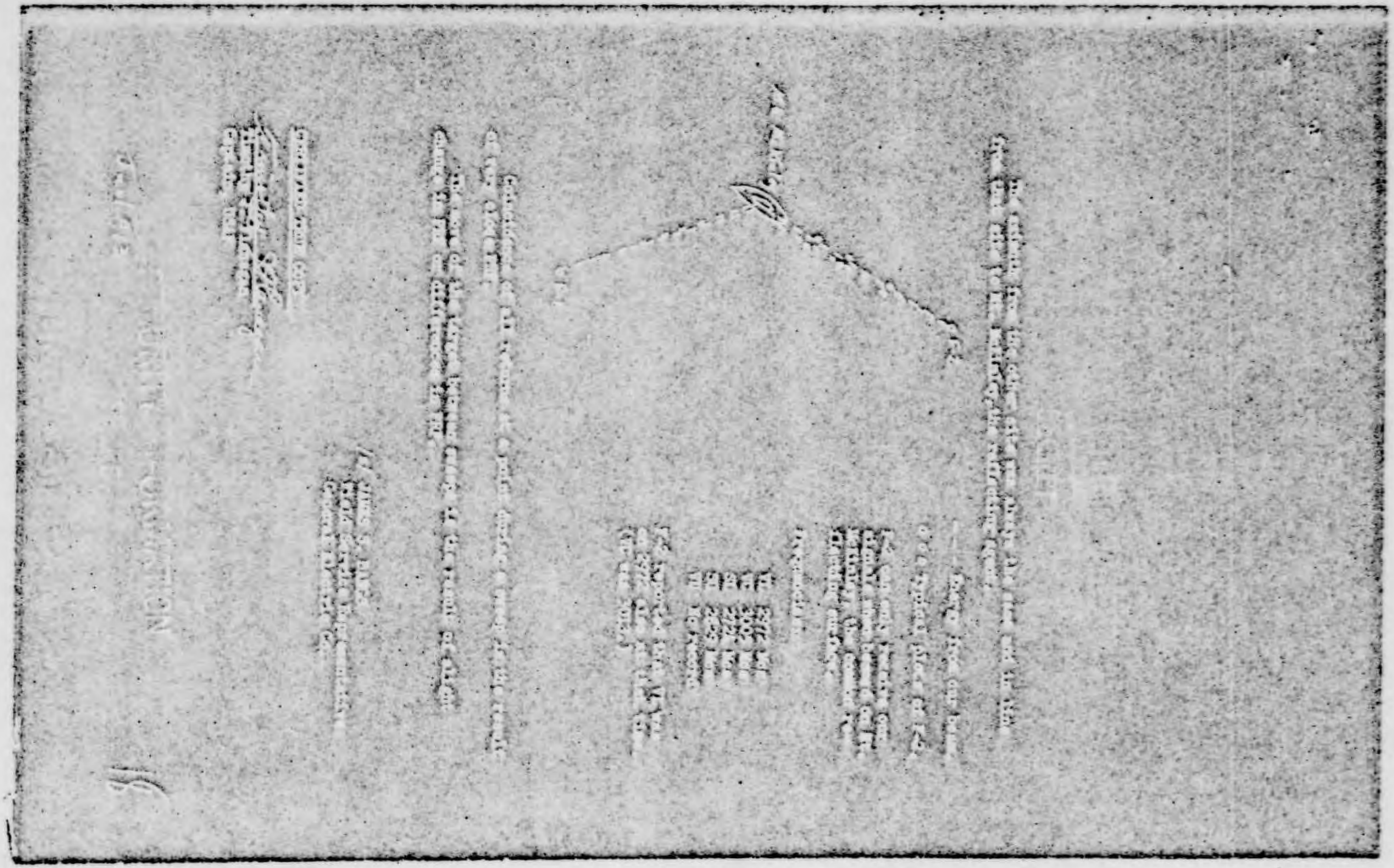


DISPOSITION FORM

CLASSIFIED

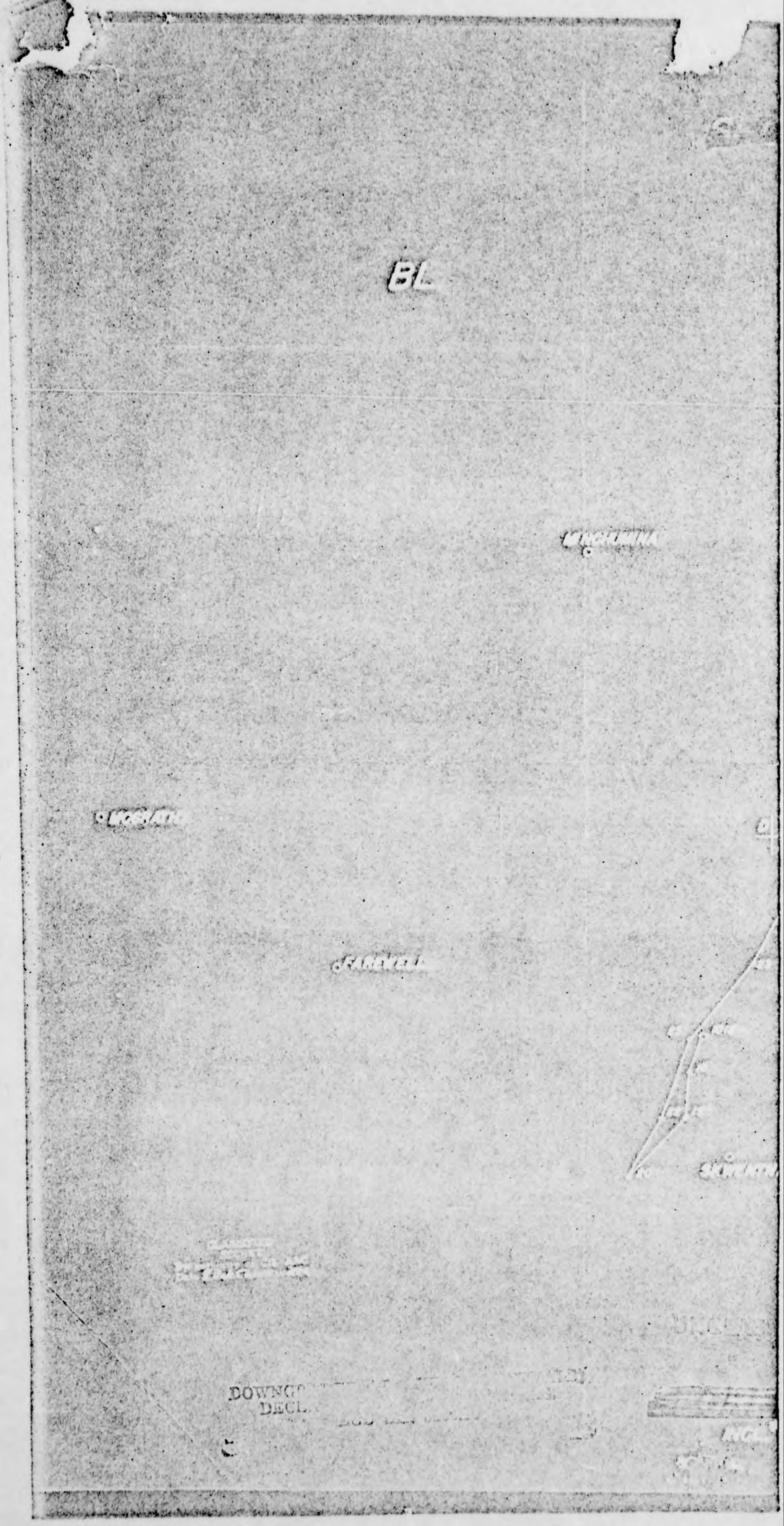
II. STATUS OF INVESTIGATION

Report by Electronics Branch of ATIC.

Target being slanted instead of perpendicular to radii from radar station indicates possible weather target. Speed may be accounted for by the momentary appearance and disappearance of other weather targets. Further explanation cannot be made.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Target caused by weather phenomena.



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State Report 6

APPENDIX II

Nenana, Alaska - 22 January 1952

I. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

At 1020Z on 22 January 1952, a radar station at Murphy's Dome, Alaska, observed an unidentified radar return. The target was going away from the station on an azimuth of 210°, at a speed of about 1500 mph when first observed but appeared to reverse its direction and returned toward the station. The set was adjusted so that the target could be observed as it closed in on the station but after this change was made the target was no longer observed. Seven minutes later (approximately 1030Z) the target was again observed, however at about its original location, and again going away from the station. Just before it faded it appeared to be making a turn back toward the station.

At 1030Z an F-94 was airborne to search for the object. At this time the object was going away from the station at a high rate of speed so the F-94 was told to orbit. About this time the ground station lost contact with the object but continued to track the F-94.

At about 1100Z as the F-94 was approaching Nenana (near Fairbanks), the radar observer in the F-94 observed two targets, one faint and one bright. The aircraft was at 30,000 ft. and the target was at 25,000 ft. The targets crossed from right to left and appeared to be traveling slowly and as the F-94 approached the target a high rate of closure was indicated. The contact was lost at a range of 200 yards.

Approximately one hour later, again near Nenana, another contact was made by the F-94. In this instance the target was kept dead ahead and level. When the target was at a range of 200 yards, the pilot pulled up and the target was lost. The rate of closure during the run was 100 knots even though the F-94 had flaps down. No other contacts were made and the aircraft was released at 1210Z.

During the two airborne contacts the F-94 was being tracked by the ground station but the object was not being picked up.

The weather was clear but no visual sighting was made. On the same night, the same crew had visually identified a C-54, a C-47, and a small civilian aircraft from 300 to 500 yards. There were no clouds in the sky but it was a dark night.

No malfunctions were found in either radar set.

II. STATUS OF INVESTIGATION

Report is being studied by the Electronics Branch of ATIC.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Pending.

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AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)	REPORT NO.	PAGE 2 OF 3 PAGES
Intelligence Directorate, Hq AAC	IR-1-52	

At approximately 1020Z, 22 January 1952, Radar Site F-2 made an original contact with an unusual target in the area of Nenana (Point "Jig"). The scope presented the target clearly but on a slant of 15° - 20° instead of perpendicular to radii, the normal manner of presentation. The speed was estimated at 1350 to 1500 knots.

At 1030Z an F-94 (pilot, Lt C.E. Garrett; radar operator, Capt V.D. Ramey) was airborne and vectored to Nenana. F-2 lost the target prior to the aircraft's arrival in the vicinity, so the aircraft was given a patrol mission along the Alaskan Range. At approximately 1052Z, F-2 again contacted this target and held it for about one (1) minute. Due to the fact that the target was outbound in relation to F-2 and to the aircraft and moving at a high rate of speed, no attempt was made to vector the aircraft on the target.

At approximately 1200Z, while the aircraft was en route to Ladd Air Force Base, the radar operator received indication of a target in the Nenana area. Finding the target ahead and low (approximately 24,000 feet altitude), the pilot made an intercept pass from 24,000 yards to 200 yards with a good target on the radar scopes. The overtaking speed was better than 100 knots.

At 200 yards the pilot pulled up and over the apparent target location. Aircraft speed on the run was approximately 250 knots indicated. After going over the target, two (2) 360° turns were made and a search of the area conducted for several minutes without making further radar contact or visual sighting.

During this time F-2 was able to track the F-94 but had no other target visible. The F-94 landed at 1225Z. The weather in the Fairbanks area during this period - 1030Z to 1230Z, 22 January 1952 - was: ceiling unlimited; visibility 15 miles or more. The pilot reported that the Aurora Borealis was brilliant but not exceptionally so.

A pilot and a ground observer reported what appeared to be a comet or meteor to the southwest of Ladd Air Force Base, approximately four (4) hours earlier, this date.

On 23 January 1952, from 1020Z to 1140Z, the same F-94 (pilot, Lt R.R. Diment; radar operator, Lt C.A. Hayward) was dispatched on a mission to see if a target similar to that of 22 January could be found. At approximately 1050Z a radar contact was made at 20,000 yards. The aircraft at this time was between Clear and Nenana at 18,000 feet in a shallow climb. An intercept run was begun and followed through to 2700 yards, at which time the target disappeared. The overtaking speed was more than 100 knots, the aircraft indicating 230 knots.

After radar contact was lost, further search was made in this area. Contact was not made either by radar or visual observation. The weather was clear, with visibility unlimited; the pilot reported that the Aurora Borealis was very active and in his opinion, unusual.

At approximately 1030W, 23 January 1952, a team checked the aircraft, utilized in these flights, for radiation, but with negative results. Due to the time lapse between the flight on 22 January and the time at which this check was made, it is possible that the negative report is not of value.

Dr. C.T. Elvey, Director of the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska, stated, in effect, that in his opinion it is unlikely that a meteor would produce an indication on a radar set that is not specifically designed or modified for that purpose.

[redacted] UNCLASSIFIED

AF FORM 112—PART I
APPROVED 1 JUNE 1948

UNCLASSIFIED [redacted]
(CLASSIFICATION)

AUTHORITY OF CG AAC
DATE [redacted] FEB. 52 INITIALS

COUNTRY	REPORT NO.	(LEAVE BLANK)
Territory of Alaska, U.S.A.	IR-1-52	

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

SUBJECT
Unusual Unidentified Radar Targets

AREA REPORTED ON	FROM (Agency)
Ladd Air Force Base, Alaska	Intelligence Directorate, Hq AAC

DATE OF REPORT	DATE OF INFORMATION	EVALUATION
8 February 1952	22 and 23 January 1952	F-6

PREPARED BY (Officer)	SOURCE
TIMOTHY J. FLANAGAN, Capt, USAF Chief, Elect Intel Br	Statements by observers of incidents.

REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable)
None

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclosures at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 113—Part II.)

This report contains a narrative statement based on observer reports and on conclusions of preliminary study of the unusual radar targets which appeared near Ladd Air Force Base, Alaska, on 22 and 23 January 1952.

APPROVED:

FRANCIS H. MacDUFF
Lt Col, USAF
Director of Intelligence

17 Incls (1 ea)
1. Msg, 5001st Composite Wg, 22 Jan 52
2. Ltr, Hq Alaskan Comd, 24 Jan 52
3. Ltr, AAC, 25 Jan 52
4. Rept, 5004th Air Intel Sv Sq, 23 Jan 52
5. Statement, Lt A.L. Boyd, Jr., Controller, F-2
6. Statement, Lt J.C. Frost, Maint, F-2
7. Statement, Lt C.E. Garrett, Plt
8. Statement, Capt V.D. Ramey, Radar Observer
9. Statement, Lt R.R. Diment, Plt
10. Statement, Lt C.A. Hayward, Radar Observer
11. Statement, Capt R.B. Peterson, Plt
12. Statement, Lt C.A. Garrett, Plt
13. Statement, J.S. Bangs, Gen Elec Co Tech Repr
14. Statement, J.S. Bangs, Gen Elec Co Tech Repr
15. Statement, A.G. Wedin, Opr Anlys
16. Statement, Lt G.H. Wilkinson, Controller, F-1
17. Overlay, Ftr Track and Unidentified Track

XXXX

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DISTRIBUTION BY ORIGINATOR
Alaskan Comd, ATTN: J-2
5001st Composite Wg, ATTN: Wg Intel Off

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AF FORM 112—PART II
APPROVED 1 JUNE 1948

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(CLASSIFICATION)

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

FROM (Agency)	REPORT NO.	PAGE 3 OF 3 PAGES
Intelligence Directorate, Hq AAC	IR-1-52	

COMMENTS of Preparing Officer:

The following hypotheses are advanced concerning the aforementioned radar targets:

1. That the energy transmitted from F-1 might have reflected from Mt. McKinley in such a manner as to create these radar targets.

Comment: Due to the frequencies and the pulse repetition frequencies of the radar sets involved (AN/CPS-6B at F-1 and F-2, and the AN/APG-33 in the aircraft) it is thought highly improbable that this hypothesis is a valid one for technical reasons.

2. That ionized gases due to meteor activity might have produced these radar targets.

Comment: It is thought that the presence of a meteor southwest of Ladd Air Force Base at approximately 2000Z, 21 January 1952, might have some bearing on the subject. It is not considered likely, in view of Dr. Elvey's statement, that the meteor itself caused this target return. There is the possibility that the ionized gases, which may have been present with the meteor's passage, might have broken into small clouds (irregular masses of ionized gas) and have been floating around in the upper air. One or more of these clouds, being at the mercy of upper air currents, may have drifted into the area of Ladd Air Force Base. Further, the possibility exists that an ionized cloud may give a radar return. The passage of an aircraft near such clouds, such as happened when the fighter broke off the intercept on both nights, would tend to disturb the surrounding air in such a manner as to disperse the ionized cloud. This would tend to explain the aircraft's inability to re-establish radar contact with the target after an intercept pass. The failure of F-2 to contact a target on 23 January 1952 is not explainable.

3. That the activity of the Aurora Borealis might have produced these radar targets.

Comment: Due to the known effect of the Aurora Borealis on radio in this theater, it is thought that some effect on radar also might be experienced. This is believed to be beyond the scientific capabilities of this Command to determine.

Timothy J. Flanagan
TIMOTHY J. FLANAGAN
Capt, USAF
Chief, Elect Intel Br

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