

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

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

19 February 1953

AIRMAIL

SPOT INTELLIGENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Sighting of Unidentified Flying Objects in San Diego, California, on 17 December 1952, by U. S. Naval employees

TO: Director of Special Investigations
Headquarters USAF
Washington 25, D. C.

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED BY AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR OF SPEC INV
BY KURT K. KUNZE, Capt, USAF
Historian

5 DEC 1975

DATE

1. SYNOPSIS: Between 1515 and 1525 hours, 17 December 1952, four members of the U.S. Navy Electronics Laboratory, San Diego 52, California, sighted two flying objects from their place of employment which they concluded were definitely not conventional flying aircraft.

2. DETAILS: This District Office is in receipt of a first indorsement from the District Intelligence Officer, Eleventh Naval District, San Diego, California, accompanied by a letter of transmittal from the U.S. Navy Electronics Laboratory, which has as inclosures the statements of four employees of the laboratory concerning their sighting of two unconventional flying objects between 1515 and 1525 hours, 17 December 1952.

3. The sightings were made by C. F. ALTHOUSE, Electronic Scientist; H. W. VOLBERG, Electronic Scientist; KATE WADDINGTON, Electronic Mechanic; and A. J. HOPKINS, Electronic Scientist, from Room 1061, Building 33, of the U.S. Navy Electronics Laboratory.

4. Weather conditions were described as mostly cloudy, with several rain squalls to the South and East. There were other jet aircraft in the area.

5. The speed of the two objects was described as being from the speed of present day jet aircraft to at least five times that speed or 1500 miles per hour.

6. The shape of the objects was described as cigar shape or disc on edge. One felt it presented a circular surface towards the viewer. One described the objects as being round shape, well defined at edges.

7. With the exception of one who stated one object appeared quite dark, all stated the objects emanated bright light, but not dazzling.

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8. The size of the objects varied from an opinion of small to very large.

9. The direction of the objects was considered to be in a generally northern direction, somewhere over the Western end of North Island.

10. Height was estimated by two viewers as approximately 500 feet.

11. No smoke, vapor or flame was noted emitting from the objects. Their course of flight was described as being without smoothness, given to sudden alterations in direction. The flight of the jets in the area was described as being smooth, no turbulence apparently being present.

12. ACTION: No action by this District Office taken or contemplated.



ARTHUR T. CAMERON
Colonel, USAF
District Commander

Incls:
4 Statements

cc: Air Tech. Int. Center
ATTN: ATIAA-2C
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

cc: DO //5 (AIR MAIL)

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, by [REDACTED]

Airborne Objects Sighted 17 December 1952

Y RURY K. KUNZE, Capt, USAF
Historian

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At approximately 1520 or 1525 on 17 December 1952, I observed several unidentified flying objects over San Diego and vicinity. The circumstances are described below.

Five people including myself were in Room 1061, Building 33 at the above time. They were C. F. Althouse, Electronic Scientist, H. W. Volberg, Electronic Scientist, N. C. Kelly, Electronic Mechanic, Nate Waddington, Electronic Mechanic and myself. I was seated at my desk and facing the windows. Volberg, Kelly and Waddington were at my desk but with their backs to the window. Althouse was working at a bench in the middle of the room.

The sky was mostly cloudy, a few clear areas, with several rain squalls to the south and east.

While engaged in a technical discussion with Volberg, Waddington and Kelly, I glanced outside and immediately noticed two bright objects maneuvering over the city in wide circles, by wide I mean a matter of miles. There were several jets in the air at the time and my first impression was that they were silver jets with the sun reflecting on them. However, as I continued to watch, my attention was diverted more and more to the objects and less to the discussion. This was caused by the dawning realization that these objects were moving easily five times as fast as anything else in the air.

After about a minute I broke off the technical discussion and called every one's attention to the objects. By this time, one was, it appeared, over the channel to the bay. Just as everyone dashed to the window, this one started a steep dive towards the water. Volberg, Althouse, Waddington and myself observed this maneuver and watched the object until it went out of sight behind the edge of the hill. This dive, due to the speed of the object, lasted only a very few seconds.

The second object was then observed by myself, Volberg and Waddington travelling high and fast in an easterly direction. It reached the base of a cloud and disappeared. I did not get the impression that it went into the cloud but it may have.

A few minutes later I observed, and was supported by Waddington, a group of objects over what we estimated would be Imperial Beach. I do not know if Althouse or Volberg saw them. I would say five or six of the things were orbiting in a small area, much as sea gulls soar around in an up-draft, however, there were no birds, I mention it merely to give a picture. This distance must have been ten or twelve miles and the objects were just at the edge of a squall. They were barely visible for only about fifteen seconds then disappeared.

The only time I had any conception of shape of the things was during the dive of the object over the channel. I have the impression that the view I had of it presented a cigar shape or disc on edge. This object was apparently quite

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close but did not look very big. As could be seen from an appreciable distance some of the objects appeared quite large.

The diving object and the one that disappeared over the city were bright, but very clearly bright, not dazzling. The objects over Imperial Beach were bright but possibly because of the distance not nearly as bright as the previous two. Kelly did not see any of the objects.

I offer no explanation other than to say that the objects were definitely like nothing else I have ever seen or heard about as definitely existing. I have considerable familiarity with airborne craft having flown over three thousand hours during the war, much of it in combat areas and developed a keen awareness of anything unusual in the air, a fair sense of judging normal speeds and altitudes and a good sense of recognition of aircraft.

[REDACTED]

Remarks by [REDACTED] on
Airborne Objects Sighted 17 December 1952

Yesterday afternoon, (17 Dec 1952) at approximately 3:20 PM, two silvery objects were observed by myself and three other men flying from the direction of Palm City towards the city. One object came across North Island and abruptly shot down at approximately at a 45° angle toward the bay. It went beyond our sight because the hill cut-off our view, before we could see if it went into the bay or not.

The other object, seemed to go over National City towards the Mountain Ranges behind Spring Valley and LaMesa, and then disappeared suddenly.

The object nearest us, seemed about one foot across, and very bright. It seemed as bright as the rotating Beacon Light on the bay, but it did not have the aberration it has, it seemed more like a bright reflected light. - - - The one nearest us may not have been a ball, but it always presented a circular surface towards us.

The speed of both, I would estimate at about 1500 MPH. They were in sight about two minutes.

They were not balloons and not jets or planes.

There was no smoke, vapor, or flame emitting from them.

[REDACTED]

Remarks by [REDACTED] on
Airborne Objects Sighted 17 December 1952

The phenomena occurred at approximately 3:15 PM, Wednesday, 17 December 1952. The area, as viewed from Room 1061A, Building 33, U. S. Navy Electronics Laboratory, was clearly visible and encompassed North Island and downtown San Diego. A heavy rain cloud was off to the left, and extended to sea level at the Coronado Rhodes. Rain clouds also formed a ceiling over the visible area but at much greater height and extended inland to the mountain tops. There were several types of aircraft in flight around North Island at the time enabling a direct comparison between local aircraft and the objects seen. The North Island Tower rotating-light was clearly visible with glaring brightness.

Two objects were seen by the undersigned and three associates as they appeared from the vicinity of the large rain cloud over Coronado Rhodes. Their altitude was roughly the same level as Building 33 and their travel was in a northerly direction generally estimated to be somewhere over the western end of North Island. It was clear that their bodies masked any portion of the city corresponding to their silhouette area.

The objects themselves were of the same order of brightness as the North Island Tower light, and appeared to have a round shape well defined at the edges as compared with a glaring light. It is emphasized at this point that the North Island Tower light was not brilliant enough to cause a retention of its brightness in the eye.

The color composition of the objects appeared to be white. Both objects were at slightly different levels when first seen and as they proceeded to a point approximately over Barge 4 in the channel, the lower object abruptly turned downward in a jerking manner quite unlike an object dropped from level flight. The descending object was lost from sight due to the mask of ground in front of Building 33. The other object continued at approximately the same level, still headed north, and then in a random manner seemed to head inland toward the mountains as it disappeared from sight over the city.

The size of the object appeared to be comparable to the size of the tail assembly of the jet aircraft on the runway that was in use (generally N-S). Their speed varied from velocities comparable to the local aircraft to speeds much faster. Their motion was not always smooth and at times made sharp changes of course. Turbulence did not appear to be present in that particular portion of the air since jets appeared to be flying around smoothly in the area.

[REDACTED]

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REMARKS BY [REDACTED] on
Airborne Objects Sighted 17 December 1952

Addenda to remarks of [REDACTED]

Under the circumstances mentioned I saw only a dark object dive at nearly a vertical path into San Diego Bay. The object was in view for less than five seconds, and appeared to be quite dark. At first I thought I was watching a helicopter, but the speed was far in excess of any known operating aircraft. The height was about 500 feet when first viewed. It is possible what I saw may have been a part or fragment dropping from some passing plane. However, I can vouch for the authenticity and sincerity of the others present.

[REDACTED]