

## **Seen by Radar and Eyes**

# **'Saucer' Outran Jet, Pilot Says; Air Force Puts Lid on Inquiry**

By Paul Sampson  
Post Reporter

Military secrecy veils an investigation of the mysterious, glowing aerial objects that showed up on radar screens in the Washington area Saturday night for the second consecutive week.

A jet pilot sent up by the Air Defense Command to investigate the latter objects reported he was unable to overtake glowing lights moving near Andrews Air Base.

Air Force spokesmen said yesterday they could report only that an investigation was being made into the sighting of the objects on the radar screen in the CAA Air Route Traffic Control Center at Washington National Airport, and on two other radar screens. Methods of the investigation were classified as secret, a spokesman said.

The same source reported an expert from the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force base, Dayton, Ohio, was here last week investigating the objects sighted July 19. It may be more than a month before this inquiry is evaluated and the information released, it was said.

The expert has been identified as Capt. E. J. Ruppelt. Reached

by telephone at his home in Dayton yesterday, Ruppelt said he could make no comment on his activity in Washington.

Capt. Ruppelt confirmed that he was in Washington last week, but said he had not come here to investigate the mysterious objects. He recalled he did make an investigation after hearing of the objects, but could not say what he investigated. The captain said he had been informed of the latest sightings of the lights.

Another Air Force spokesman said here yesterday the Air Force is taking all steps necessary to evaluate the sightings.

"The intelligence people," this spokesman explained, "sent someone over to the control center at the time of the sightings, and did whatever necessary to make the proper evaluation."

Asked whether the radar equipment might have been malfunctioning, the spokesman said radar, like the compass, is not a perfect instrument and is subject to error. He thought, however, the investigation would be made by persons, acquainted with the problems of radar.

Two other radar screens in  
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# **Air Force Lid Put on Inquiry**

the area picked up the objects. An employe of the National Airport control tower said the radar scope there picked up very weak "blips" of the objects. The tower radar, however, is for short ranges and is not so powerful as that at the center. Radar at Andrews Air Force Base also registered the objects from about 8:30 p. m. until midnight. Andrews radar located them about seven miles south of the base.

## **On Screen Till 3 a. m.**

The objects, "flying saucers" or what have you, appeared on the radar scope at the airport center at 9:08 p. m. Varying from four to 12 in number, the objects were seen on the screen until 3 a. m., when they disappeared.

At 11:25 p. m., two F-94 jet fighters from the Air Defense Command squadron at Newcastle, Del., capable of attaining 600-mile-per-hour speeds, took off to investigate the objects.

Airline, civil and military pilots described the objects as looking like the lighted end of a cigaret or a cluster of orange and red lights.

One jet pilot observed four lights in the vicinity of Andrews Air Force Base, but was not able to overtake them, and they disappeared in about two minutes.

The same pilot observed a steady white light 10 miles east of Mount Vernon at 11:49 p. m. The light, about five miles from him, faded in a minute. The lights also were observed in the Beltsville, Md., vicinity. At 1:40 a. m., two other F-94 jet fighters took off and scanned the area until 2:20 a. m. but did not make any sighting.

## **Visible in Two Ways**

Although unidentified objects have been picked up on radar before, the incidents of the last two Saturdays are believed to be the first time they have been spotted on radar—while visible to the human eye.

Besides the pilots who last Saturday saw the lights, a woman living on Mississippi ave. se. told The Post she saw a "very bright light" streaking across the sky toward Andrews Base about 11:45 p. m. Then a second object, with a tail like a comet, whizzed by, and a few seconds later, a third passed in a different direction toward Suitland, he said.

Radar operators plotted the speed of Saturday night's "visitors" at from 38 to 90 miles an hour, but one jet pilot reported faster speeds for the light he saw.

The jet pilot reported he had no apparent "closing speed" when he attempted to reach the lights he saw near Andrews. This means the lights were moving at least as fast as his top speed—a maximum of 600 miles per hour.

One person who saw the lights when they first appeared in this area did not see them last night. He is E. W. Chambers, an engineer at Radio Station WRC, who spotted the lights while working early the morning of July 20 at the station's Hyattsville tower.

Chambers said he was sorry he had seen the lights because he had been skeptical about "flying saucers" before. Now, he said, he sort of "wonders" and worries about the whole thing.

Leon Davidson, 804 South Irving st., Arlington, a chemical engineer who has made an exhaustive study of flying saucers as a hobby, said yesterday re-

ports of saucers in the East have been relatively rare.

Davidson has studied the official Air Force report on the saucers, including some of the secret portions never made public, and analyzed all the data in the report.

Davidson, whose study of saucers is impressively detailed and scientific, said he believes the lights are American "aviation products"—probably circular flying wings, using new-type jet engines that permit rapid acceleration and relatively low speeds. He believes they are either new fighters, guided missiles or piloted guided missiles.

He cited some of the recent jet fighters, including the Navy's new F-4-D, which has a radical bat wing, as examples of what he thinks the objects might resemble.

Davidson thinks the fact that the lights have been seen in this area indicates the authorities may be ready to disclose the new aircraft in the near future. Previously, most of the verified saucers were seen over sparsely inhabited areas, Davidson explained, and now, when they appear here, it may indicate that secrecy is not so important any more.