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HISTORY
OF THE
NORTHEAST AIR COMMAND

1 January 1952 - 30 June 1952

RCS 1-AF-D2A

Prepared by Historical Branch of the
Air Adjutant General's Office

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DATE	SITE	METHOD OF DELIVERY
6 June	N-27	A/C*
11 June	N-27	A/C
12 June	N-26 & N-27	Ship
16 June	N-26 & N-27	Ship
21 June	N-27	A/C
25 June	N-26 & N-27	Ship
26 June	N-26 & N-27	Ship

Intelligence Summary*

A number of unidentified aircraft and other unidentified aerial phenomena were sighted throughout the Northeast Air Command in closely adjacent areas during this reporting period. Some of these sightings were explained, but the majority remained unidentified.

Aircraft. The incidents can be divided into three categories involving aircraft, vapor trails and unconventional objects. The first incident occurred over western Iceland on 13 March 1952. The GCA at Reykjavik, Iceland, picked up six plots of an unidentified flying object with an estimated flying speed of 250 knots at an estimated altitude of 8,000 feet.

The following day a four-engine aircraft believed to be a B-29 type aircraft, was observed by a navigator and scanner of a SAC B-50 at about 29,000 feet altitude at 67°00'N, 13°50'E. No lights were visible on the aircraft which descended into the undercast. These two incidents were tentatively evaluated as possible Soviet Reconnaissance efforts.

* NEAC Air Intelligence Digest, Sept 52, Vol 13, No 9 on file, NEAC historical archives.

The next three unidentified aircraft were reported by Danish weather personnel along the east coast of Greenland. The first, reported from Danmarkshaven, Greenland, $76^{\circ}46'N$, $18^{\circ}45'W$, concerned an aircraft which was heard over the weather station on 1 April. An attempt was made to contact the aircraft but no answer received. A second aircraft was heard through overcast skies over the Aputiteq, Greenland, weather station $67^{\circ}55'N$, $32^{\circ}15'W$, on 13 May. On 9 June a third unidentified aircraft was sighted by Danish weather personnel at Doneborg, Greenland, $74^{\circ}10'N$, $20^{\circ}30'W$. The aircraft was at a high altitude and could not be contacted by radio. None of these aircraft have been identified.

On 29 June a U. S. Navy ice reconnaissance aircraft enroute from Duck Island, $74^{\circ}10'N$, $57^{\circ}50'W$, to Thule Air Base reported sighting a B-29 or B-50 type aircraft at an altitude of from 5,000 to 6,000 feet flying at a speed of about 170 knots. Contact could not be made with the aircraft. The Strategic Air Command advised that no SAC aircraft were in the area at the time of the sighting.

On the preceding day, 28 June, the GCA at Thule Air Base reported picking up three blips, possible aircraft, on their scope. The targets appeared to be in close formation approximately 35 miles due south of Thule Air Base, at an estimated altitude of 6,000 to 9,000 feet. The operator estimated the blips to be about the size made by a C-54 type aircraft. However, the possibility existed the blips were caused by ice crystal formations.

Vapor Trails. Vapor trails were sighted on two and possibly three occasions over NEAC bases. The first positive report occurred at Goose Air Base on 1 March when two officers of the base observed vapor trails

high overhead while flying a C-47. The contrails were being formed at a high rate of speed and were developing in a northeasterly direction. No identified aircraft were known to be in the area at the time.

Vapor trails were next sighted at Thule Air Base when a USAF officer and a civilian employee reported having seen a vapor trail originating about 30,000 feet over the base on 25 April. Although a NEAC C-54 was in the area at the time, the aircraft was under 12,000 feet—the minimum altitude at which vapor trails could have been formed.

Unconventional Objects. Several instances involving the visual sighting of unconventional flying objects were reported in the Northeast Air Command during the period of this history. The first occurred at Corner Brook, in western Newfoundland, near Ernest Harmon AFB on 18 April. Two sightings were made by Newfoundlanders within a period of 18½ hours. The objects were described as round or elliptically shaped and yellow-gold in color at an estimated altitude of 2,000 feet with a speed of about 500 MPH on a heading of northeast.

The next reported unidentified aerial object in the Command occurred at Goose Air Base, Labrador, on 19 June. This sighting, made by an officer of the 373rd Transportation Major Port, lasted approximately one minute. The object was described as a red light turning to white which moved in a wobbly manner. Confirmation of the sighting was afforded by GCA at Goose Air Base.

Two days later, on 21 June, another unidentified aerial object was sighted at Goose Air Base by an officer of the 373rd Major Port. The object, described as disk shaped, was traveling at a very slow rate of

speed. No sound was audible as it gradually gained altitude. It was first observed at an altitude of about 1,000 feet moving from north to south. The object appeared white in color, and light seemed to radiate from it. The object was visually observed for about five minutes.

The weather station at Padloping Island, $67^{\circ}30'N$, $62^{\circ}44'W$, reported on 26 June the sighting of an unconventional flying object. The object was first noticed when it entered a weather observer's field of vision as he was tracking a pibal balloon with a theodolite (a telescopic instrument used to measure horizontal and vertical angles). The object was silver and of peculiar shape; it was alternately described as elliptically shaped, pear shaped and oblong and flat. The object was seen by three members of the weather station and viewed through the theodolite for approximately five minutes.

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Auth: CGNEAC
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Date: 23 May 53

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N O R T H E A S T A I R C O M M A N D

1 July 1952 - 31 December 1952

RCS 1-AF-D2

Prepared by the Historical Division
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SECURITY INFORMATION

Intelligence Summary

Vital intelligence sightings of unidentified vapor trails, aircraft, and submarines increased in NEAC during the period 1 July - 31 December 1952.

On 2 September 1952 Danish colonists at Angmagssalik, Greenland, (6530N, 3733W) reported an unidentified aircraft traveling from west to east. At Goose Air Base (5319N, 6025W) on 14 September 1952 vapor trails were sighted by an observer in an aircraft about 40 miles SSW of Goose AB. They appeared to be formed by an aircraft flying in a SW direction. The visibility was unlimited.

On 10 October 1952, over the North Atlantic (5200N, 2820W) a Pan American Airlines pilot reported sighting an unidentified aircraft at 16-17,000 feet on a heading of southeast. As the two planes closed, the unidentified aircraft performed a 180 degree turn and disappeared in a northwesterly direction. An unidentified aircraft was reportedly heard on 14 October 1952 in the Jan Mayen Island vicinity (7110N, 0720W) by weather station personnel.

Sondrestrom Air Base (6701N, 0720W) reported hearing an aircraft (believed to be jet) heading in an easterly direction on 14 November. No visual or GCA contact was made with the aircraft. On the Ptarmigan Route (8304N, 1500W) the Alaskan Air Command reported to NEAC the sighting of an unidentified aircraft on a heading of 235 degrees. The aircraft was sighted 2,000 feet below the mission aircraft and was observed by the left scanner. The date: 16 November 1952.

On 4 December the Keflavik, Iceland (6401N, 2204W) radio tower contacted an unidentified aircraft. The aircraft identified itself as

Air Force jet 679 (or 697) and requested the latest Keflavik weather. At Sondrestrom Air Base on 10 December 1952 contrails were reported at an estimated 50,000 feet on a heading of 019 degrees. The contrails had a definite point of origin and could be seen forming. ¹²⁴

At Narsarssuak Air Base (6140N, 4610W) "U" shaped contrails were seen forming in a south-southeasterly direction. Both ends of the contrail were reported to have been visible and described as "clear cut." The date: 12 December 1952.

Unidentified aircraft and vapor trails were not the only intelligence sightings to be made during this period. During August and September six unidentified submarines were either sighted visually or ¹²⁵ contacted by radar.

The first sighting was made on approximately 25 August 1952 at September Harbor (5633N, 6143W) near Goose Air Base. The sub was observed through field glasses for two hours by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. At approximately the same location (Main Harbor 5634N, 6143W) on 27 August Eskimos reported a submarine which surfaced for a short time and then put out to sea through the only ~~chartered~~ run.

On 31 August 1952 Narsarssuak Air Base reported that an airman had sighted a submarine surfacing in a southeasterly direction with the ~~st~~alk and superstructure awash. The airman observed the sub from an altitude of 9,000 feet at Lower Davis Strait (5730N, 5300W) while on ¹²⁶ flight between Goose Air Base and Narsarssuak Air Base.

On approximately 20 September at Wolstenholm Fjord (7637N, 6944) ~~an Eskimo~~ hunter said he observed an object he believed to be a

submarine about 400 yards from shore. It turned and submerged before closer observation could be made.

At Sondrestromfjord (6640N, 5150W) near Sondrestrom Air Base a Danish policeman reported on 22 September 1952 that he saw a submarine surface for approximately two minutes, dive and then resurface. The submarine was believed to be of the Soviet P-2 class and carried no visible markings.

Radar contact was made by a MATS aircraft with what was believed to be a submarine at Davis Strait (6600N, 5500W) on 30 September. The estimated course of the object was 050 degrees magnetic. ¹²⁷

The sightings reported above reflect only the possible Soviet reconnaissance patrols which have been detected. Because of the vast areas within NEAC which are unpopulated and, as yet, unpatrolled, an undetermined number of aircraft and submarines could have come and departed completely undetected. ¹²⁸

In a special study of vital intelligence sightings for 1952, prepared by the Director of Intelligence, NEAC, it was stated that reports of unidentified sightings could be expected to continue on an increasing basis within NEAC. The study continued:

There are indications that the Communist world is becoming increasingly apprehensive about the intentions of the new United States administration. This apprehension should tend to increase Soviet reconnaissance activity. Although it is admitted that some of these incidents are based on inclusive and unconfirmed evidence to positively identify them as representative of Soviet activity, judging from the pattern established in 1952, it is to be expected that this unidentified air activity will increase as spring approaches.

To cope with the believed increase in Soviet reconnaissance attempts, the Director of Intelligence, NEAC, began preparation of a

regulation that would supplant existing directives on reporting unidentified sightings of intelligence interest. However, it was realized that many reports of sightings originated from foreign sources (either Canadian or Danish), and that very little control could be exercised over such sources insofar as getting them to expedite their reporting to U.S. agencies. Close liaison between base commanders and their Canadian and Danish contacts was suggested as one solution in minimizing time delays in the reporting of unidentified sightings. ¹²⁹

Although reports of unidentified aircraft and submarines within NEAC were of primary interest during this period, attention was focused on still another intelligence matter during October. On 29 October 1952 Headquarters, USAF requested that NEAC verify whether or not Headquarters, NEAC or Thule Air Base were able to pick up "Moscow Molly" ^{*} or any other Communist broadcasts beamed at Thule AB. Headquarters, USAF specifically requested details concerning time, clarity ¹³⁰ of reception, and nature of the broadcasts.

In a TTMSG to Headquarters, USAF on 30 October Headquarters, NEAC stated the broadcasts in question were being picked up by short wave on five and six megacycles, 11 and 12 megacycles, 15.1 megacycles, and 11 megacycles. The clarity of broadcasts, NEAC said, ranged from clear to garbled. The broadcasts were heard at Thule AB, Sondrestrom AB, ~~Barraarsuak~~ AB, and Pepperrell AFB. The broadcasts were heard at 1410Z ¹³¹ hours to 1415Z hours on 1 September 1952 at 0915 Thule local Time, and in the evening from 2300Z to 2400Z hours.

* Female Russian radio commentator.

120. 1st. Ind., Ltr., CO Pepperrell AFB to CG NEAC, 20 Oct. 1952, subj.: Rehab. of Nfld. Long Lines, in AAG 600.12, item 125.
121. Pers. Interview by Historical Tech. with Comm. personnel, 5 Apr. 1953.
122. NEAC Commanders' Conference, 9 Feb. 1953, in NEAC Historical files.
123. Special Study, "Analysis of Unidentified Vital Intelligence Sightings," in NEAC Historical files.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. NEAC Commanders' Conference, 9 Feb. 1953, in NEAC Historical files.
130. TTMSG Ref. SAFOPI 51489, Hq. USAF to CG NEAC, 29 Oct. 1952, in AAG 413.44, item 222.
131. TTMSG, Hq. NEAC to Hq. USAF, 30 Oct. 1952, in AAG 413.44, item 223.
132. Ibid.