

A "Certain" identification indicated a minimum amount of doubt regarding the validity of the evaluation. By "rule-of-thumb" reasoning, the probability of the identification being correct was better than 95 per cent. A "Doubtful" identification indicated that the chance was less positive, but that there was a better than even chance of being correct.

It is emphasized again that, as was true for other phases of evaluation, preliminary and final identifications were entrusted only to scientists and engineers who, in addition to their broad scientific background, had received instruction, where necessary, in specialized subjects. The panel of consultants provided background information for this instruction. Many of the cases representing unusual features or maneuvers were submitted to and discussed with various members of the panel of consultants prior to the final identification.

Competency in the application of the knowledge necessary for making identifications was maintained by frequent collaboration among the personnel involved, and systematic spot checks of the work. In addition to the general fund of knowledge required to identify satisfactorily a reported unidentified aerial object, an attempt was made to correlate specific data such as flight plans of aircraft, records of heliport activities, weather conditions, and an astronomical almanac with the reported sighting.

The procedure followed in making final identifications decreases complication because of the importance assumed by the identification as a basis for statistical treatment. As was mentioned, a conference of four qualified persons, two from AFIC and two from the panel of consultants, decided upon the final identification for each sighting report. This work was done at AFIC, periodically, as reports became ready.

During an identification conference, each sighting report was first studied, from the original data, by one person. If that person arrived at a decision, it was checked against the preliminary identification. If the two identifications were the same, the report was appropriately marked and considered finished. If the two identifications did not agree, the report was considered later by everyone participating in the conference until a group decision could be made.

If an evaluator was unable to categorize the report as one of the common objects or as a natural phenomenon, and his opinion was that the sighting should be recorded as UNKNOWN, a group decision was also required on that report before it was considered finished. A group decision was necessary on all reports likely recorded as UNKNOWN, regardless of what the preliminary identification had been. In cases where a group decision was not made within a reasonable time, the report was put aside and later assigned to certain members of the panel of consultants for their opinion. If, after this, disagreement continued to exist, the report of the sighting was identified as UNKNOWN.

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