

UNCLASSIFIED

U. S. AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS, AIR MOBILITY DIVISION  
MEMPHIS AIRFIELD  
MEMPHIS, TENN 38151

No. of pages - 2  
MEMPHIS/NO/AA/1  
28 April 1958

SUBJECT: Psychological Analysis of Reports of Unidentified  
Aerial Objects

LOCATION: Aero Medical Laboratory

SOCIAL NO.: MEMPHIS-03-128      Expenditure Order No. 694-38

A. PURPOSE.

1. As the request of the Technical Intelligence Division, Intelligence Department, AFM, an analysis has been made, from a psychological point of view, of 618 investigations of persons reporting sightings of unidentified aerial objects.

B. FACTUAL DATA.

2. A report of this analysis is attached as Appendix A.

C. DISCUSSION.

3. It is concluded by the writer that there are sufficient psychological explanations for the reports of unidentified flying objects to provide plausible explanations for reports not otherwise explainable. These errors in identifying real stimuli result chiefly from inability to estimate speed, distance and size.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS.

4. Test the ability of pilots to estimate the courses of a small lighted balloon while doing aerobatics with it at night. It is suggested that several pilots try to fly preset courses and maintain courses on such courses at night and report accurately their observations. It would be desirable, but probably impossible, to keep them from knowing the nature of the light sources.

5. In all future reports of unidentified objects specify the location of object with reference to polar coordinates (direction and degrees above the horizon) rather than asking individuals to estimate distance. If possible, obtain an estimate of size in terms of the visual angle subtended by the object.

6. In all future investigations determine the angular position of the sun with respect to the unidentified object and the observer.

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