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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Archival Research

From: jan@cyberzone.net (Jan Aldrich)
Date: Fri, 13 Dec 1996 10:41:41 -0800
Fwd Date: Sat, 14 Dec 1996 12:12:44 -0500
Subject: Re: Archival Research

UFO UpDates - Toronto posted:

> From: fsphys@brunswickmicro.nb.ca
> Date: Thu, 12 Dec 96 03:32:37 -0400
> Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Archival Research
> To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalseve.net>

> Kudos to Jan Aldrich for his fine report on available archival materials.
> Another word not used by the USAF was Corona. The MAXWELL AFB files (where the
> Blue Book Files were then located) had a number of listings for UFO in the
> various base and group histories card index.. separate from the Blue Book
> material. Unfortunately many of those were classified 20 years ago when I
first
> looked and some were still classified less than 10 years ago.

Stan, you will happy to know that these unit histories are now
declassified or the staff will extract the ufo portions on request.

The staff at Maxwell AFB was most helpful. Generally, most items can be
declassified almost "on the spot." The USAF can not declassified SECRET
Formerly Restricted Data (SFRD) or SECRET Restricted Data (SRD) as these
classifications are for nuclear weapons data and can only be declassified
the Department of Energy. Accident and crash data are considered
privileged and out of sensitivity to relatives are generally not
available. The staff can generally find "work arounds" for SFRD, SRD,
and privileged information. The same is true for microfilm records. I
have order almost 50 rolls of microfilm since my visit to Maxwell AFB and
had no trouble to date.

Unit histories were most extensive in the early 1950s (also, ufo coverage
in histories was at its peak 1951-3). In the 1960s an USAF form which
abbreviated the process was introduced and much of the color went out of
the histories. In the late 1940s unit histories are sketchy or
non-existent.

OSI investigations are never discussed. Generally, only a statement to
the effect that "The local OSI office conducted several investigations of
security and non security matters during the reporting period."

Unit histories are a fertile area for further research. Sometimes only
that fact that ufos were sighted is recorded, but generally in the
footnotes the location of such reports in unit files or the disposition
of such reports is recorded. Once again, some reports apparently were
not in the Blue Book files.

>There was for
> example Project Pinball.. re UFO observations in Alaska way back around
> 1950 as I recall.

>STF

I was very interested in finding out about "gizmos," radar "ghosts" from the late 1940s. Almost no references exist. Unit histories, to date, have not been much help as they are rather meager for this period.

Aircraft warning and control units in the 1950s reported large numbers of unidentified target that were never resolved. These were put down to operator inexperience, natural phenomena, or aircraft not following flight plans. Since the characteristics were not ufos, they were not reported as such. Could these targets be matched with ufo reports? Well, they didn't make it to Blue Book so no one will know.

Project Pinball is mentioned into the late 1950s in the unit histories of the 5004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron. FIOA requests reveal that institution memory of this project is gone. Documents indicate that Pinball "tracks" were thought to be Soviet probes of the US radar defenses. (Wrangell Island seemed to be a favorite Soviet target.) Since this radar data was apparently saved for future analysis, these files could indeed have some value ufowise.

Jan Aldrich, Project 1947

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