

conclusively failed to reveal even a rough model, and since the data as a whole failed to reveal any marked patterns or trends.

Commentary on SR 14

The conclusion of SR 14, that there was no evidence of the reality of "flying saucers," makes an interesting contrast to the initial general feeling (not specifically stated in the report) that "It is very reasonable to believe that some type of unusual object or phenomena is being observed as many of the sightings have been made by highly qualified sources" (see section on History of SR 14). The report was criticized by Capt. Ruppelt, the man who initiated it, for claiming that all but a few of the UFOs could be explained.⁵ Ruppelt also could not understand why the AF had held onto the report for two years after its intended completion date of October 15, 1953 (it was released in October 1955).

The report can also be criticized for, to use Ruppelt's term, "weasel wording." Although nowhere is there a positive statement that UFOs don't exist, there are plenty of weak "probability arguments" that are worded in such a way as to cause a careless reader to believe that they are conclusive against the reality of UFOs. One of these probability statements is based upon the claim that the statistical analyses failed to turn up any patterns, etc. However, it has been pointed out here that the statistical analyses did yield unexpected results such as the duration of Unknowns (not all brief sightings), the large percentage of Unknowns in the highest quality cases (33% of Excellent reports), the unusual geographical distribution (seeming to favor regions of high amounts of aircraft activity and/or military air bases), and the disparity between certain characteristics of the Knowns and Unknowns as expressed by the results of the chi-squared tests.

Another of these probability arguments is based upon the failure to construct a single "flying saucer model" from the most detailed cases. Here they imply that because none of