

APPENDIX VII

Menana, Alaska - 22 January 1952

I. DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

At 1020Z on 22 January 1952, a radar station at Murphy's Dome, Alaska, observed an unidentified radar return. The target was going away from the station on an azimuth of 210°, at a speed of about 1500 mph when first observed but appeared to reverse its direction and returned toward the station. The set was adjusted so that the target could be observed as it closed in on the station but after this change was made the target was again observed, however, at about its original location, and again going away from the station. Just before it faded, it appeared to be making a turn back toward the station.

At 1030Z an F-94 was airborne to search for the object. At this time the object was going away from the station at a high rate of speed so the F-94 was told to orbit. About this time the ground station lost contact with the object but continued to track the F-94.

At about 1100Z as the F-94 was approaching Menana (near Fairbanks), the radar observer in the F-94 observed two targets, one faint and one bright. The aircraft was at 30,000 ft. and the target was at 25,000 ft. The targets crossed from right to left and appeared to be traveling slowly and as the F-94 approached the target a high rate of closure was indicated. The contact was lost at a range of 200 yards.

Approximately one hour later, again near Menana, another contact was made by the F-94. In this instance the target was kept dead ahead and level. When the target was at a range of 200 yards, the pilot pulled up and the target was lost. The rate of closure during the run was 100 knots even though the F-94 had flaps down. No other contacts were made and the aircraft was released at 1210Z.

During the two airborne contacts the F-94 was being tracked by the ground station but the object was not being picked up.

The weather was clear but no visual sighting was made. On the same night, the same crew had visually identified a C-54, a C-47, and a small civilian aircraft from 300 to 500 yards. There were no clouds in the sky but it was a dark night.

No malfunctions were found in either radar set.

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II. STATUS OF INVESTIGATION

Report by Electronics Branch of ATIO.

Target being slanted instead of perpendicular to radii from radar station indicates possible weather target. Speed may be accounted for by the momentary appearance and disappearance of other weather targets. Further explanation cannot be made.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Target caused by weather phenomena.

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