

Then, starting Nov. 7 for four straight nights, Malmstrom AFB and a series of ICBM Tauch control facilities in Montana, along with Minot AFB in North Dakota, began reporting flyovers of brightly lit objects—this time referred to in the 24th NORAD region commander's log as "UFO's." The mysterious activity was so intense that on the second night, Malmstrom sent up two F-106 interceptors after its radar picked up seven separate aircraft between 9500 feet and 15,500 feet. They were flying at only 7 knots, later sped up to 150 knots, and then virtually hovered at 3 knots.

A memorandum from the National Military Command Center at the Pentagon describes what happened after the seven objects were picked up on radar:

"Ground witnesses observed lights in the sky and the sounds of engines similar to jet fighters. Cross-tell with FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] revealed no jet aircraft within 100 NM [nautical miles] of the sightings. Radar tracked the objects over Lewistown, Mont., at a speed of 7 knots. . . ."

The jets took off but were unable to make contact because the objects began a cat-and-mouse game with the F-106's.

"Personnel at 4 SAC sites reported observing intercepting F-106's arrive in area; sighted objects turned off their lights upon arrival of interceptors and back on upon their departure."

The Pentagon memo makes it clear that radar operators checked out their equipment, and it was functioning properly. Also ruled out were atmospheric tricks caused by the northern lights. Other entries from the 24th NORAD region commander's log detail the strange happenings throughout this period:

"7 Nov. Received a call from the 341st SAC CP saying that the following missile locations reported seeing a large red to orange to yellow object. . . ."

"7 Nov. SAC advised that the LCF at Harlowton, Mont., observed an object which emitted a light which illuminated the site driveway."

"7 Nov. L-1 reports that the object to their northeast seems to be issuing a black object from it, tubular in shape."

"8 Nov. A security camper team at K-4 reported UFO's with white lights, one red light 50 yards behind white light. Personnel at K-1 seeing same object."

"8 Nov. L-5 reported object increased in speed—high velocity, raised in altitude and now cannot tell the object from the stars."

"9 Nov. SAC CP reports UFO 20 miles southeast of Lewistown [Mont.], orange white disc object."

"10 Nov. UFO sighting reported by Minot Air Force station, a bright starlike object in the west, moving east, about the size of a car. The object passed over the radar station, 1000 feet to 2000 feet high, no noise heard."

The following night, Canadian Air Force personnel at NORAD's Falconbridge radar station near Sudbury, Ontario—along with many civilians and local policemen—saw a similar brightly lit object. F-106's from Selfridge AFB in Michigan failed to make contact. A confidential report issued by the Combat Operations Center, NORAD, describes the incident:

"Falconbridge reported search and height finder radar paints on an object 25 to 30 NM south of the sight ranging

in altitude from 26,000 feet to 72,000 feet. The site commander and other personnel say the object appeared as a bright star but much closer.

"With binoculars, the object appeared as a 100-ft. diameter sphere and appeared to have craters around the outside. Be assured that this command is doing everything possible to identify and provide solid factual information on these sightings [sic]."

"I have also expressed my concern to SAFOI [Air Force information] that we come up soonest with a proposed answer to queries from the press to prevent overreaction by the public to reports by the media that may be blown out of proportion. To date efforts by Air Guard helicopters, SAC helicopters and NORAD F-106's have failed to produce positive ID."

News reports on the strange activities were confined to sketchy stories in such local newspapers as the Bangor (Maine) Daily News and the Sudbury (Ontario) Star.

Reporters had no idea that UFO-type activity had occurred at any bases other than their local installation, and the Pentagon issued instructions to its information officers to keep the lid on.

Despite three weeks of intense and similar activity across the northern tier states, a Pentagon telex ordered information officers: "Unless there is evidence which links sightings or unless media queries link sightings, queries can best be handled individually. . . . responses should be direct, forthright and emphasize that the action taken was in response to an isolated or specific incident."

During these three weeks, the Air Force constantly checked with other military installations, the Federal Aviation Administration, local airports, law enforcement agencies, the FBI, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and others to determine if any of the craft might belong to these agencies. The results were negative.

What flew over the military installations during those 24 nights between Oct. 27 and Nov. 19 will probably never be fully explained, and the last entries in the 24th NORAD region commander's log serve only to offer more tantalizing hints:

"12 Nov. UFO reported from KO1. They say the object is over Big Snowy [mountain] with a red light on it at high altitude."

"12 Nov. Second UFO in same area reported. Appeared to be sending a beam of light to the ground intermittently."

"19 Nov. SAC command post observed object traveling NE at a fast rate of speed. Object bright white light seen 45 to 50 sec following terrain 200 ft off ground. The light was two to three times brighter than landing lights on a jet. . . ."

For UFO Watchers

Several UFO study groups welcome inquiries and reports of sightings from the public. Among the principal groups are:

Center for UFO Studies, 1609 Sherman Ave., Suite 207, Evanston, Ill. 60201.

National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, 1 Bank St., Suite 307, Gaithersburg, Md. 20760.

Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, 3910 E. Kleindale Rd., Tucson, Ariz. 85712.

Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, 191 E. 161st St., Bronx, N.Y. 10451.