

UFO's vs. USAF

Amazing (but True) Encounters

by Michael Satchell

Shortly before 8 o'clock on a clear, crisp autumn night three years ago, a military police sergeant named Danny K. Lewis was on guard duty at the weapons storage area of Loring Air Force Base in Maine when he heard a whirring noise like that of an approaching helicopter.

Lewis watched the peculiar lights of the machine as it lowered to within 300 yards of the weapons dump. He raised the alarm, the command post was alerted, additional security teams were deployed, and the control tower began tracking the craft on its radar.

Loring, a bulwark of Strategic Air Command's (SAC) northern string of nine air bases, is home for the 42nd Bombardment Wing. Fifteen massive B-52's—five always on alert—along with 15 KC-135 refueling tankers, are stationed there. The weapons storage area is a particularly sensitive spot, for it contains the nuclear bombs carried by the B-52's.

The strange craft, which displayed a white strobe and reddish-orange lights, flew over and around Loring for 90 minutes, tracked on radar or followed by observers who assumed it to be a helicopter from its noise.

Not sure of what he was facing, the 42nd Wing commander requested F-106 jet fighter interceptors from North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) bases at Hancock Field, N.Y., and North Bay, Ontario. The request was denied, leaving little alternative than to beef up security patrols, monitor the craft's movements

and wonder at its purpose.

The wires soon began to hum between Loring and the National Military Command Center in Washington. The Pentagon situation room passed along information about the intruder to the operations center at the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Va. No one had the faintest idea what they were dealing with.

The puzzling intrusion at Loring the night of Oct. 27, 1975, was the curtain raiser to a bizarre and still-unexplained series of incidents that unfolded over the next three and a half weeks at SAC bases at Loring, Wurtsmith AFB in Michigan and Minot AFB in North Dakota; at the Malmstrom Minuteman ICBM base in Montana; at a half dozen missile launch control facilities throughout Montana; and at the NORAD long-range radar station operated by the Canadian Air Force at Falconbridge, Ontario.

During that time, dozens of U.S. and Canadian Air Force personnel observed, tracked, and pursued with jets and helicopters a series of unidentified aircraft or brightly lit objects with the capability of hovering, flying at great speeds and lofty heights.

Teams of F-106 interceptors rushed into the air to pursue the intruders when they were over Malmstrom and Falconbridge, a helicopter was launched when the craft returned twice more to Loring, and KC-135 tankers chased the objects at Loring and Wurtsmith.

Air Force pursuers were unable to

get close enough to identify the craft because they switched off their lights, took evasive action or turned on the speed and outdistanced the jets and helicopters.

The full story of this UFO mystery has never been published before. It has been pieced together almost entirely from Air Force files—some classified and confidential, others declassified for release under the Freedom of Information Act.

The bulk of the documents were obtained under the act by W. Todd Zechel of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, which sues various branches of the government for release of UFO-related reports; and by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), located in suburban Washington, D.C.

More detailed reports of the mysterious incidents are contained in other documents which the Air Force has so far refused to release. The reports reviewed by PARADE offer a tantalizing but limited account of what happened during those 24 nights in the autumn of 1975. Asked for detailed unclassified information on the matter, the Air Force issued only a terse statement confirming that the incidents took place.

According to an Air Force information officer, there was no follow-up investigation and the overflights were not positively identified as either helicopters or fixed-wing craft.

Asked how unknown aircraft could penetrate SAC bases at will for five