

than one witness per sighting; (2) of the 3201 sighting reports, 689 (21.5%) were placed in the U group, and these sightings were of 434 unknown objects; (3) most of the U objects were reported in 1952 which, according to SR 14 and other sources, was the year when improved reporting procedures were introduced; (4) when the 3201 UFO cases were separated into four reliability groups (Excellent--E, Good--G, Doubtful--D, and Poor--P), it was found that the E group of objects (213) had a higher percentage (33.3%) of U cases than did the P group (435 objects with 16.6% unknown); the same sort of relationship held between the G and D groups, with 28.8% of the G group (757 objects) unknown while only 13% of the D group (794) were unknown; when the portion of the E group of sightings that was made by military people was analyzed, it was found that 38% of the sightings were unknown; and (5) the durations of sightings of unknown objects were usually longer than 30 seconds.

Result (2) above is one reason for the often repeated claim that the Air Force was unable to identify about 20% of the unknowns during the first years of its investigation. Ruppelt was aware of statistics such as these, and published an early set of statistics in his book (p. 277).¹ Result (4) above contradicts the hypothesis that the best witnesses, the ones who were included in the E group, should produce the best descriptions of the phenomena and thus should have the lowest percentage of unexplained cases, if there were no true unknowns being observed. On the other hand, this result is consistent with the hypothesis that at least a portion of UFO reports contain descriptions of truly anomalous objects.

Result (5) above contradicts the generally held opinion that UFOs are seen for such short times that the witness does not have a chance to see a sufficient number of details for a positive identification.

Another unusual result that was presented without comment by the SR 14 investigators was the geographical distribution of U.S. reports. The investigators divided the U.S. mainland into