

PROJECT 10073 RECORD

1. DATE - TIME GROUP 8/1450Z 8 Feb 53	2. LOCATION BARTER ISLAND, ALASKA
3. SOURCE 2 AF Pilots	10. CONCLUSION BALOON
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS ONE	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION TEN MINS	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Round brilliant obj appeared to be a falling leaf. Obj hovered a few seconds and began to climb with zig zag maneuvers disappearing at a high altitude.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION GROUND VISUAL	
7. COURSE EAST	
8. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ☐ Yes ☐ No	

ACTION
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C-1 PRIORITY [REDACTED]
FM CG ALAC ELMENDORF AFB ALASKA
TO CS USAF WASH DC
CG ATIC WPAFB OHIO
CG ADC ENT AFB COLO
INFO COM ALASKAN SEA FRONTIER KODIAK ALASKA
NEAC PEPPERRELL AFB NFDL
FEAF TOKYO JAPAN
5001ST COMPOSITE WG LADD AFB ALASKA
US ARMY FT RICHARDSON ALASKA
CINCAL ALASKA

8 10

13.50

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PARAPHRASE NOT REQUIRED. SEE CRYPTO-CEN
BEFORE DECLASSIFYING

ATTN ATIAA-2C , AAOID-42237 FLY OB RPT. FOL REPT REC FR CO
AACS DET BARTER ISLAND, UNIDENTIFIED OBJ AT THIS STA 081450Z
FIRST SIGHTED AT APPRX 5000 FEET DESCENDING FR THE WEST
FALLING LEAF PATTERN, DESCENDED TO APRX 2000 FEET OVER THIS STA
AND HOVERD, HAD BRILLIANT ORANGE WHITE LIGHTS WHICH WAS FLASHED
SEVERAL TIMES, ATTN WAS ORIGINALLY DIRD TO THIS OBJ BY
SOUND SIMILAR TO A HELICOPTER, THE NOISE WAS NOT LOUD AND WAS
NOT AUDIBLE ABOVE AN ESTD 5000 FEET, THE OBJ CLIMED BACKUP DOING
SAME PATTERN AS DESCENDING AND IN ONE HALF MILE
OF FWD MTN CLIMBED TO APRX 15000 FEET. THE FWDND CLIMBING
SPEED INCREASED AS IT CLIMBED TO THE EAST AT 081458Z THE OBJ
WAS OUT OF SIGHT , SIZE WAS ESTD AT APRX C-47 ACFT
DIMENSIONS, THE WEA AT TIME WAS 5000 SCATTERED WITH A SURF
VISIBILITY OF 7 MILES. THIS OBJ WAS VIEWED BY TWO RATED PILOTSM.
WRITTEN REPORT FOLLOWS

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DOD DIR 5200.10

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2. ltr
3. ltr
4. C. files

COUNTRY Territory of Alaska		REPORT NO. IR-2-53	(LEAVE BLANK)
AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT			
SUBJECT FLYOB RPT			
AREA REPORTED ON Alaska		FROM (Agency) Intelligence Directorate, AAC	
DATE OF REPORT 20 February 1953	DATE OF INFORMATION 8 February 1953	EVALUATION B-5	
PREPARED BY (Officer) WINSTON E. BOUTELLE, Capt., USAF		SOURCE Captain R. E. Barnes, and 1st Lt. Griffin	
REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable) AAC Msg AAOID-4 2237 09 2100Z FEB 53			

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclosures at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 112—Part II.)

Between 1450Z and 1500Z, 8 February 1953, two rated pilots report observing an unidentified flying object at Barter Island, Alaska (70° 09' N - 143° 32' W). The object, a round white light, was seen by one observer for ten (10) minutes and by another observer for two (2) minutes. This sighting may have been the light on a PIRAL upper air sounding, which was reportedly released at 08 1515Z.

APPROVED: *Francis H. MacDuff*
FRANCIS H. MacDUFF
Colonel, USAF
Director of Intelligence

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The following report is based on personal interrogation of the source (Captain Robert E. Barnes) and has been reviewed by source for accuracy and completeness.

On the morning of 8 February 1953, Captain Barnes was thawing and heating a C-47 AF9215 at the Barter Island air strip, Barter Island, Alaska. Barnes was working in the right wheel well when he heard a noise which seemed to be out of synchronization with the Hermon Nelson heaters running nearby. He ducked out of the wheel well and walked over to the heaters located in front of the left main gear. He immediately realized that the new noise was not caused by the heaters, but was emanating from a large, round, bright object, which was descending over the building area approximately 3/4 mile away. The time was 1450Z (0450 local) by Captain Barnes' watch, which he states would be accurate to within plus or minus three minutes.

When first seen, Barnes estimated the object to be approximately 5000 feet. It was descending in a sort of falling leaf pattern except that there was no upward swing at the end of each side to side movement as in a true falling leaf descent. Captain Barnes estimated distance covered by the side to side movements at about 200 feet.

Within approximately 45 seconds, the object had reached an estimated 2000 feet directly over the building area where it hovered for approximately 45 seconds. At this point, the object blinked out twice for intervals estimated at 1/50th of a second. The object was described as round in shape and brilliant white in color. Small ray-like appendages appeared on either lower side (see sketch) which Captain Barnes could not accurately describe as light beams or solid material. They were definite in shape, as he noted in the sketch. He could make out these appendages only while the object was below 4000 feet.

The color of the light was similar to that of white hot metal except that it did not appear to illuminate the area and left absolutely no afterglow when it blinked out. He described it as a cold but brilliant light.

Captain Barnes estimated the size as smaller than a C-47 or approximately 30 to 40 feet in diameter. Captain Barnes feels that his estimates for the size and altitudes of the object are valid due to the sound and the fact that the object later passed directly overhead.

The object seemed to be affected by the wind as it hovered at 2000 feet, and Captain Barnes stated it acted at all times like some sort of controlled craft. After apparently drifting while hovering at zero speed, the object moved about 50 feet against the wind to near its original position.

The sound emanating from the object was described as not loud but a deep, heavy sound such as large concrete-mounted electric generators would make while operating.

After hovering for approximately 45 seconds, the object began to climb out using the same pattern as it did for the descent. The climbout was not at a high rate of speed and the vertical movement was greater than the lateral movement. As it ascended and moved away to the East, the object seemed to tack in order to maintain the Easterly course. During the ascent, the object blinked regularly at about one minute intervals. When blinking, the light would stay off about 1 or 2 seconds.

During its climbout, 1st Lieutenant Lewis E. Griffin was driving a weasel from the building area down to the aircraft. When he arrived, Captain Barnes pointed out the object for Lieutenant Griffin. At this time, the object was directly overhead at an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 feet, and the time was 0458 local by Lieutenant Griffin's watch. (NOTE: Lieutenant Griffin states his watch might have been about

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three minutes fast). Captain Barnes did not note the time of disappearance. The two observers continued to watch the light for approximately two more minutes, as it traveled Easterly blinking as it went and disappeared in the distance. As it ascended, the object seemed to pick up speed; the light dimmed somewhat and took on an orange tint.

Captain Barnes is an F-94 jet pilot with 9 years service and 1470 hours of flying time. He has been stationed in Alaska since August 1950. Captain Barnes has read and heard accounts of flying saucers and has a normal interest in such events but has never seen anything similar to the object reported herein.

Lieutenant Griffin was interviewed regarding the observation and verified his portion of the sighting as described by Captain Barnes. Griffin saw the object directly overhead when Captain Barnes pointed it out and watched it for about two minutes. He felt it impossible for himself to estimate the size, altitude and speed of the object, since he had no idea of what the object was. He did state that it appeared larger than a large star. The weather according to Lieutenant Griffin was CAVU.

Lieutenant Griffin is a pilot with approximately 1100 hours flying time. He has a total of 10 years service, 5 years of which have been on active duty. He has been stationed in Alaska since December 1951.

The following weather sequences were reported from Barter Island at the times indicated:

08/1430Z 5000' scattered, visibility 7 miles, very light snow, wind SW
9 Knots temperature, -29° dew point -37°

08/1530Z 5000' scattered, visibility 7 miles, very light snow, wind SW
8 Knots, temperature -32° dew point -42°

Following are winds aloft from the 08/1500Z sounding:

5000'	170°	8 Knots
10000'	230°	37 Knots
17000'	220°	40 Knots

The following information regarding the 081500Z weather balloon release was supplied by the Barter Island Weather Detachment:

- Exact time of release of 8 February 1953 balloon was 1515 Zulu plus or minus 3 minutes.
- Sounding was PIBAL, with 100 gm red balloon.
- Balloon was lighted.
- The ascent was unusual only in that, with light variable surface winds, the wind direction swung thru 360 degrees between surface and 7000 feet level.
- The complete code of data of winds aloft for this observation is as follows:

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BTI 15	02308	13301	20903	31217	41308	
	51708	62212	72320	82321	92330	99991
	02337	22237	42234	62231	82240	99992
	02248					

COMMENTS of Preparing Officer:

Although the time of sighting and time of PIBAL release does not correlate exactly, many other factors such as rate of movement, course of travel and ascension rate seem to agree with the PIBAL sounding. Personnel of the 7th Air Weather Group state that the exact time of release as reported by the Barter Island Weather Detachment may possibly be the time that the sounding was completed instead of the time that the sounding started.

In regards to the sound reported, Captain Barnes agrees to the possibility that, due to his initial surprise at seeing a strange light, he may have jumped to conclusions in associating the sound with the light.

Captain Barnes feels sure that the object was descending when he first noticed it. However, the possibility exists that an illusion of descent may have been created by the light variable surface winds and the resultant changes in direction of travel of the balloon.

The falling-leaf pattern and blinking of the light could have been caused by the oscillation normally associated with PIBAL releases.

Considering all factors, it is the opinion of the preparing officer that the object sighted was probably the light from the 081500Z PIBAL sounding. The observer and the preparing officer will witness a PIBAL release from Merrill Field in order to determine if any similarity exists.

It is felt that the importance of this report lies in the fact that a qualified aerial observer may have mistaken the light on a PIBAL for an unconventional flying object.

Winston E. Bontelle

WINSTON E. BOUTELLE

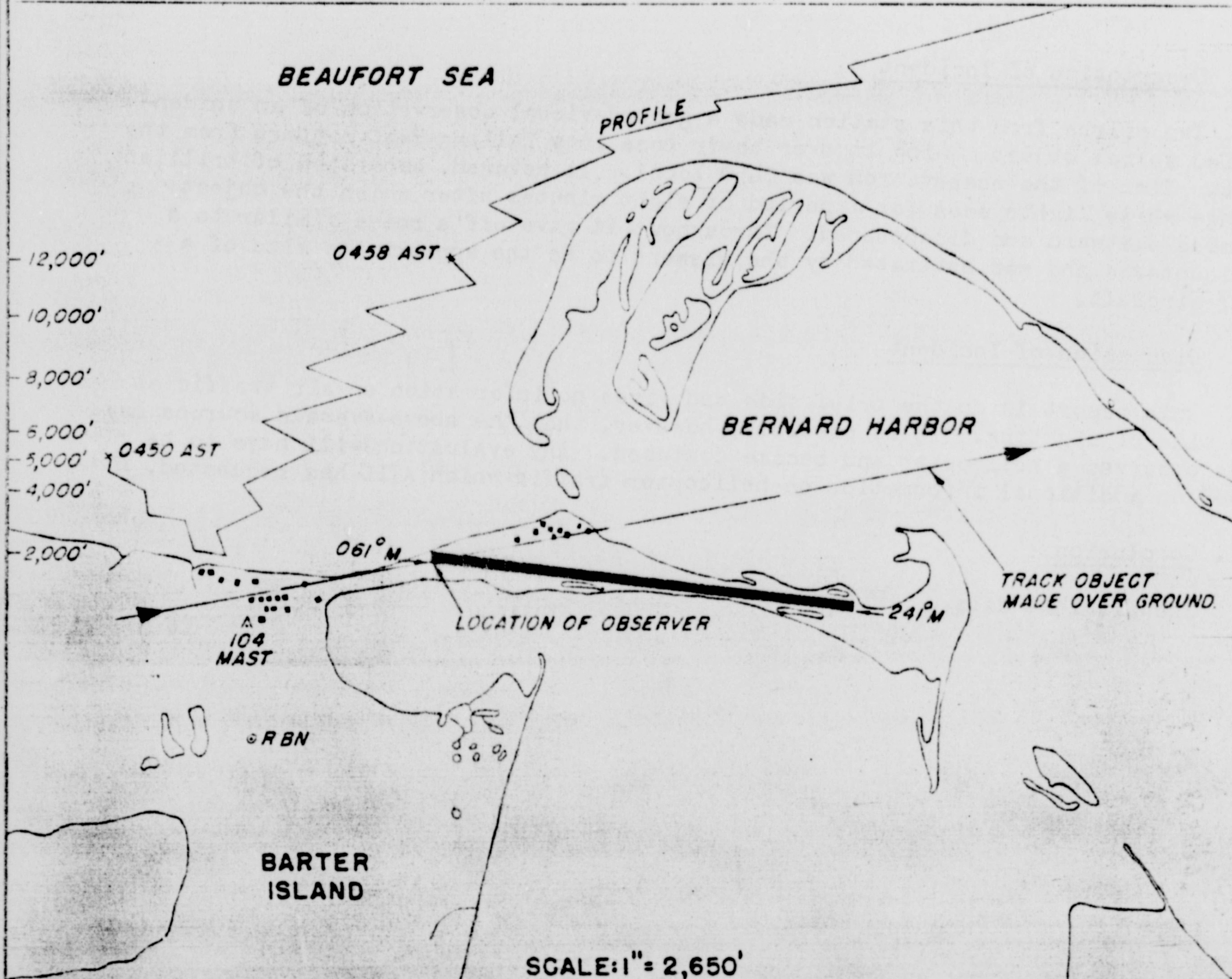
Captain, USAF

Chief, Plans, Policy and Collection Div.

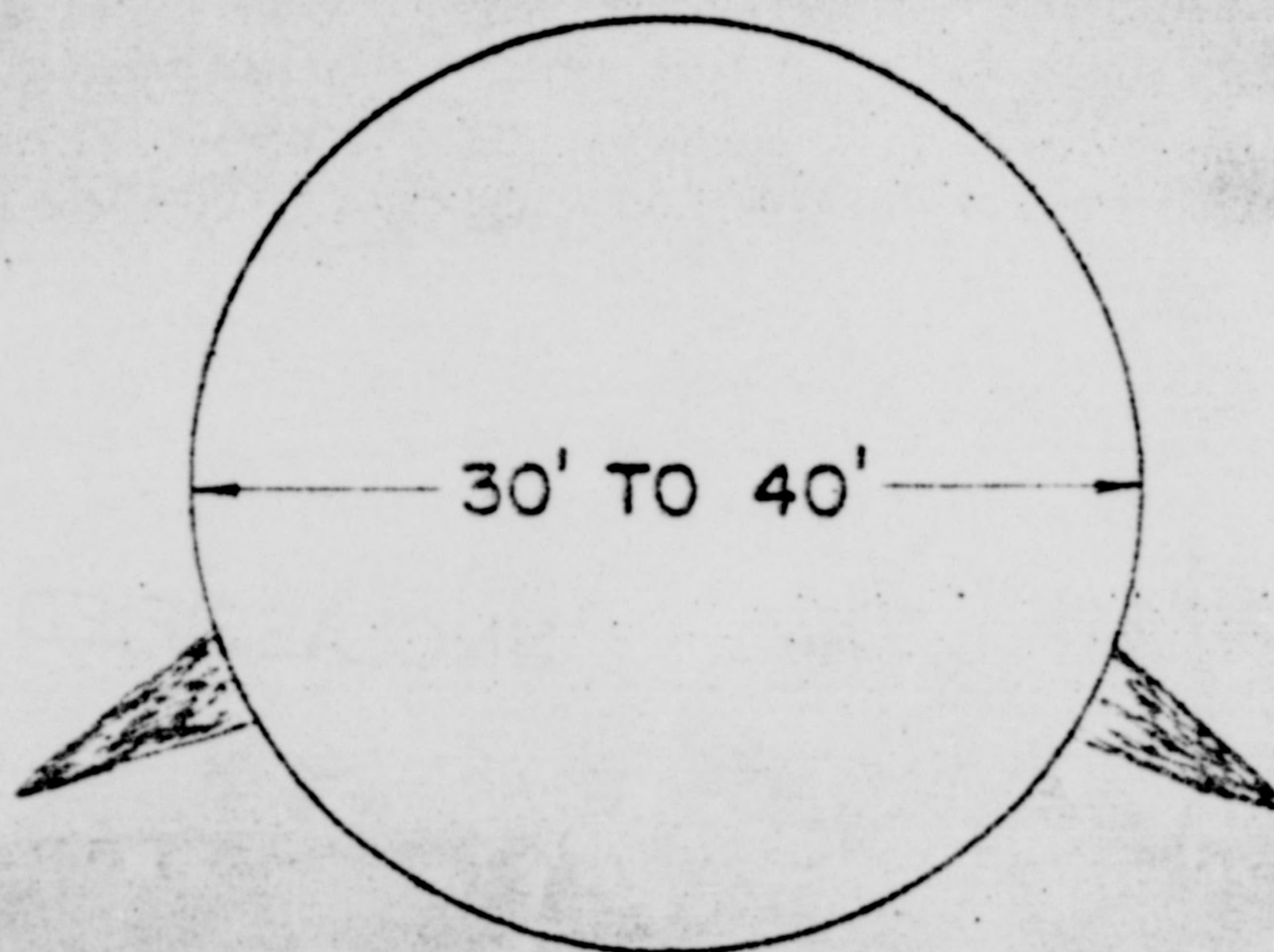
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SKETCH
OF
OBJECT



~~SECRET~~
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Barter Island, Alaska

SL-10
8 February 1953

I. Description of Incident

Two pilots from this station made a ground-visual observation of an unidentified aerial object coming in over their base in a falling leaf pattern from the west. Time of the observation was 0450 local. It hovered, consisted of brilliant orange white lights seen for a period of eight minutes after which the object climbed eastward and disappeared. Throughout it gave off a noise similar to a helicopter's and was estimated by the viewers to be the approximate size of a C-47 aircraft.

II. Discussion of Incident

This report is on the brief side and gives no information on air traffic at the time of sighting. It is possible, however, that the above-average sources may have observed a helicopter and became confused. Any evaluation will have to be based on additional information on helicopter traffic which ATIC has requested.

III. Conclusion

Insufficient data.

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