

It is appropriate to specify that those cases that have been sighted from aircraft are considered to be aeronautic cases. This chapter describes five significant cases that occurred in different parts of the world and which were the subject of an investigation by the authorities of the countries in question. In four cases, the objects were detected both visually and by radar. In the fifth case, they were observed by a number of independent witnesses.

2.1 Lakenheath (United Kingdom) (August 13-14, 1956)

The joint USAF - U.S. Air Force - and RAF [Royal Air Force] military bases of Lakenheath and Bentwaters are located 30 km northeast of Cambridge with respect to the first and near the coast to the east of this city with respect to the second. Unknown aerial objects followed by their radars during the night of August 13 to 14, 1956, were judged "*unidentified*" by the report published in 1969 by the Condon Commission tasked with evaluating the research of the U.S. Air Force on UFOs (cf. Chapter 9). In September 1971, the magazine *Astronautics and Aeronautics* published a study of the case by Thayer, the radar expert on the Condon Commission, which was based in part on a study presented in 1969 by Professor MacDonald, an atmospheric physicist. For the record, we point out that on several occasions, and namely in 1976, Philippe Klass, editor of the journal *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, attempted to criticize this work and to reduce the case to a series of ordinary events (meteorites, radar propagation anomalies, etc.). The incidents began at the Bentwaters base, preceded, between 2100 and 2200 hours, by unusual sightings of the approach control radar [center], which we will not go into in further detail. They took place as follows:

- At 2255 hours, the radar detected an unidentified object moving east to west passing over the base, always almost into the wind at an apparent speed of 2000 to 4000 miles per hour (mph), or 3200 to 6400 km/h. No sonic boom was mentioned. The personnel of the Bentwaters control tower said they saw a bright light flying over the ground from east to west "*at an incredible speed*" at an altitude of approximately 1200 m. At the same time, the pilot of a military transport plane flying over Bentwaters at an altitude of 1200 m stated that a bright light passed under his plane tearing east to west "*at an incredible speed.*" The two visual sightings confirmed the radar detection.

- The Bentwaters radar operator reported these concurring radar and visual sightings to the shift supervisor at the Lakenheath [air] traffic radar control center, an American noncommissioned officer to whom we are indebted for a quite detailed report of these sightings and those that follow. The report, which was sent to the Condon Commission in 1968 by the then retired NCO, is coherent and does not contradict the documents in the USAF [Project] Blue Book file except in a few minor points; among these documents, the regulation telex sent by Lakenheath to the Blue Book team on the day of the incident and the report forwarded two weeks later to that same team by American Captain Holt, an intelligence officer at Bentwaters.

- The shift supervisor at the Lakenheath base alerted his radar operators. One of them detected a stationary object approximately 40 km southwest of the base, almost in the axis of the trajectory of the supersonic object seen at 2255 hours. The shift supervisor called the Lakenheath approach radar [center], which confirmed the sighting. The radar technicians at the air traffic control center suddenly saw the object immediately go from immobility to a speed of 600 to 950 km/h. The shift supervisor notified the base commander.