SPÖKFLYGARNA/ SPØKELSESFLY/ KUMMITUSLENTOKONEET

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WHO AM I?

- Former Department of the Air Force employee; historian assigned to HQ Air Force Reserve at Robins AFB and HQ Space and Missile Systems Center at Los Angeles AFB (1995-1998).
- Received classified briefing on UAP incident in 1996.
- Interviewed by Defense Department's All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO), 17 May 2023.
- Guest lecturer, "UAP and Homeland Security," Farmingdale State College SUNY.

MYSTERY AIRCRAFT IN SCANDINAVIAN SKIES

- Reports of unidentified aircraft and aerial lights appeared across Scandinavia during the 1930s.
- The phenomenon subsequently became known as the “Ghost Flyers” or “Ghost Planes.”

Timeline

MYSTERY AIRCRAFT IN SCANDINAVIAN SKIES, 1933–1937

1933

First Reports

Initial reports of mysterious aircraft in northern Sweden begin to appear.



1933

Winter 1933–1934

Major Wave

A large number of reports of unidentified aircraft across northern Sweden (and some in Norway and Finland).



1933–1934

1934–1936

Relative Lull

The number of reports decreases significantly.

The "Ghost Flyer front" in Norrland is relatively quiet during this period.



1934–1936

Autumn 1936

Reports Return

New reports of mysterious aircraft begin to appear again in northern Sweden.



Autumn 1936

Winter 1936–1937

Investigations Intensify

Swedish military authorities investigate the renewed reports, with increased surveillance and reporting from the Boden military area and surrounding regions.



1936–1937

9 February 1937

Boden Military Report

The commander of the Boden military district reports that it can be regarded as established that foreign aviation probably occurred over the military district during the preceding months.



9 Feb 1937

18 May 1937

Parliamentary Debate

The Swedish Riksdag examines both the 1933–1934 and 1936–1937 reports.

The General Staff again concludes that foreign aviation probably occurred in northern Sweden.



18 May 1937



NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA 1933–1937

- Vast distances.
- Sparse population.
- Long winter darkness.
- Snow, fog, cloud, and difficult visibility.
- Limited aviation and communications infrastructure.
- Rapid development of military and civilian aviation.

THE MYTHOLOGY



FACTS BLEED INTO MYTHOLOGY

Later accounts transformed the reports into a much larger story:

- Hundreds of mysterious aircraft.
- Secret Soviet reconnaissance.
- German secret aircraft.
- Smuggling operations.
- Secret landing sites.
- Aircraft landing on frozen lakes and bodies of water.
- A phenomenon extending across Scandinavia as one coordinated operation.
- Later accounts often merge the 1933–1934 and 1936–1937 reports into a single phenomenon.



FOREIGN OR SECRET AIRCRAFT

- Soviet aircraft were an obvious suspect because of Sweden’s proximity to the Soviet Union and documented Soviet airspace violations in Finland.
- Swedish and Finnish authorities, however, distinguished known Soviet incursions from the unidentified reports.
- Other possibilities included reconnaissance, clandestine military operations, smuggling, or experimental aircraft.
- The rapid development of aviation during the 1930s made such operations technically possible.



FOREIGN OR SECRET AIRCRAFT

- But technical capability is not evidence that a particular aircraft or nation actually operated in Scandinavia.
- The Swedish General Staff could not establish the nationality, purpose, or operating base of the aircraft it considered unidentified.
- Aerial reconnaissance in 1934 found no confirmed foreign base, depot, landing site, or crash in northern Sweden.
- When reports returned in late 1936 and early 1937, Swedish military authorities again suspected unauthorized foreign aviation, but dedicated surveillance produced no confirmed observation of a foreign aircraft.

THE REALITY



SWEDISH GENERAL STAFF INVESTIGATION 1933–1934

The Swedish General Staff reviewed:

- **96 Swedish reports.**

Of those:

- **12 were considered fully credible.**
- Reports from Norway and Finland were also included in the broader analysis.
- The combined number of reports classified as credible was **46.**

WHAT “CREDIBLE” MEANT

“Credible” did not mean:

- The aircraft was unidentified.
- The aircraft was foreign.
- The aircraft was anomalous.
- The reported performance was extraordinary.
- The event was extraterrestrial.

It meant that the General Staff had excluded reports considered certainly false, unreliable, or insufficiently substantiated.



SWEDISH GENERAL STAFF CONCLUSIONS 1933–1934

The Swedish General Staff concluded that:

- Aircraft of undetermined nationality had probably flown over northern Scandinavia during winter 1933–1934.
- The flights probably occurred at high altitude over sparsely populated areas.
- Aircraft sometimes descended near points useful for orientation.
- Some flights might have been round trips.
- Multiple aircraft were sometimes reported.
- The purpose and nationality could not be established.



SWEDISH AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE 1933–1934

Swedish authorities conducted aerial reconnaissance over:

- Västerbotten inland.
- Lower Västerbotten.
- Part of the Gulf of Bothnia.
- Areas where foreign aircraft bases or temporary landing sites had been suspected.

They found:

- No confirmed foreign aircraft base.
- No confirmed foreign aircraft depot.
- No confirmed landing or crash.
- Later air-observation organizations reported no unauthorized flights.



THE FINNISH MILITARY VIEW

- Finnish General Staff Chief Karl Lennart Oesch was skeptical of the Ghost Flyer reports.
- Many observations consisted of either lights or sounds, rather than both.
- Known Soviet aircraft incursions were separately identifiable.
- Finnish investigators conducted controlled flights to reproduce reported observations.
- Actual aircraft were readily detected by sound and often visually located.
- Oesch concluded that many Finnish reports had ordinary explanations.

THE CASES 1933–1934



CASE #1: HOLMÖGADD, SWEDEN 6 JANUARY 1934

- At 1957–2002, lighthouse keeper Ruthqvist and six others observed two lights, one red and one green.
- A severe storm was producing heavy surf.
- The lights passed approximately 600 m offshore at an estimated altitude of 400 m.
- Near Valsöarna, the lights reportedly descended to approximately 150 m.
- They then rose again and disappeared east-northeast toward Finland.
- Other observers along the coast reported lights moving in the same general direction.

CASE #1: HOLMÖGADD, SWEDEN 6 JANUARY 1934

The aircraft capability itself is not necessarily extraordinary. The difficult questions are operational:

- Why was an unidentified aircraft operating at low altitude over the Gulf of Bothnia during a severe storm?
- Was the reported altitude change accurate?
- Were the separate coastal observations of the same object?
- If it was conventional aircraft, who was operating it?
- Is there evidence for a documented mission?



CASE #2: HOLMÖGADD, SWEDEN 9 JANUARY 1934

- At approximately 2140, seven observers reported red and green lights from an apparent aircraft.
- The object approached at very low altitude.
- It changed course near the lighthouse.
- It followed the eastern side of Grossgrundet.
- It climbed to approximately 100 m.
- It later returned and apparently circled the area for approximately one hour.
- It subsequently climbed to approximately 1,500 m and departed east toward Finland.

CASE #2: HOLMÖGADD, 9 JANUARY 1934

- The reported performance is largely within the capabilities of 1930s aircraft.
- The anomaly is the apparent behavior.
- Was an unidentified aircraft conducting a deliberate search or reconnaissance operation?

Or:

- Did observers interpret ordinary aircraft activity as a coordinated maneuver?
- The available record does not establish the answer.

CASE #3: LUBBOTRÄSK, SWEDEN 10–11 JANUARY 1934

- At ~2230, two aircraft were reported, first appearing from 5 km from the southeast.
- One aircraft apparently flew so low that it intermittently disappeared behind the trees.
- A witness reported seeing its propeller.
- The witnesses followed the aircraft for approximately 15 minutes.
- The low aircraft had a reddish light; the other aircraft had a bluish-white light.
- Engine noise was reportedly absent.



CASE #3: LUBBOTRÄSK, SWEDEN 10–11 JANUARY 1934

The lack of engine noise is not decisive. The more important features are:

- Two aircraft.
- Night operation.
- Extremely low reported altitude.
- Dense northern terrain.
- Long observed track.
- Aircraft apparently identifiable enough for one witness to see a propeller.
- The Swedish General Staff explicitly included the case among its 12 credible Swedish reports.
- Who was operating aircraft in this environment?



CASE #4: KVALØY, NORWAY, 11 JANUARY 1934

- At 1950, two witnesses observed a light toward the eastern end of Løvøya.
- The light was seen against the sea and land, not the sky.
- It disappeared several times.
- At approximately 2040, another light was seen in approximately the same location.
- The light was reported to rise into the air over Barfallet.
- It then moved rapidly south toward Gjeslingen.
- No engine noise was heard.
- The witnesses believed it must have been an aircraft.

CASE #4: KVALØY, NORWAY, 11 JANUARY 1934

These questions remain:

- Was the light physically on the water or merely seen against the sea?
- What exactly did the witnesses mean by “rising into the air”?
- What was the relationship to Gjeslingen?
- Was there a contemporary police or military investigation?
- What did the January 1934 Norwegian newspapers report?
- Can an ordinary aircraft, boat, lighthouse, or optical effect explain the observation?

RECURRENCE 1936–1937



- After a relative lull from winter 1934 until autumn 1936, reports again appeared in northern Sweden.
- The renewed reports were fewer than during the 1933–1934 wave.
- Reports included lights, sounds, and alleged aircraft observations.
- Military authorities in Upper Norrland considered unauthorized foreign aviation a possibility.
- Reports from Norway were also cited in the Swedish General Staff’s assessment.
- The renewed reports eventually triggered a new surveillance effort around Boden and northern Sweden.



NORWEGIAN REACTION

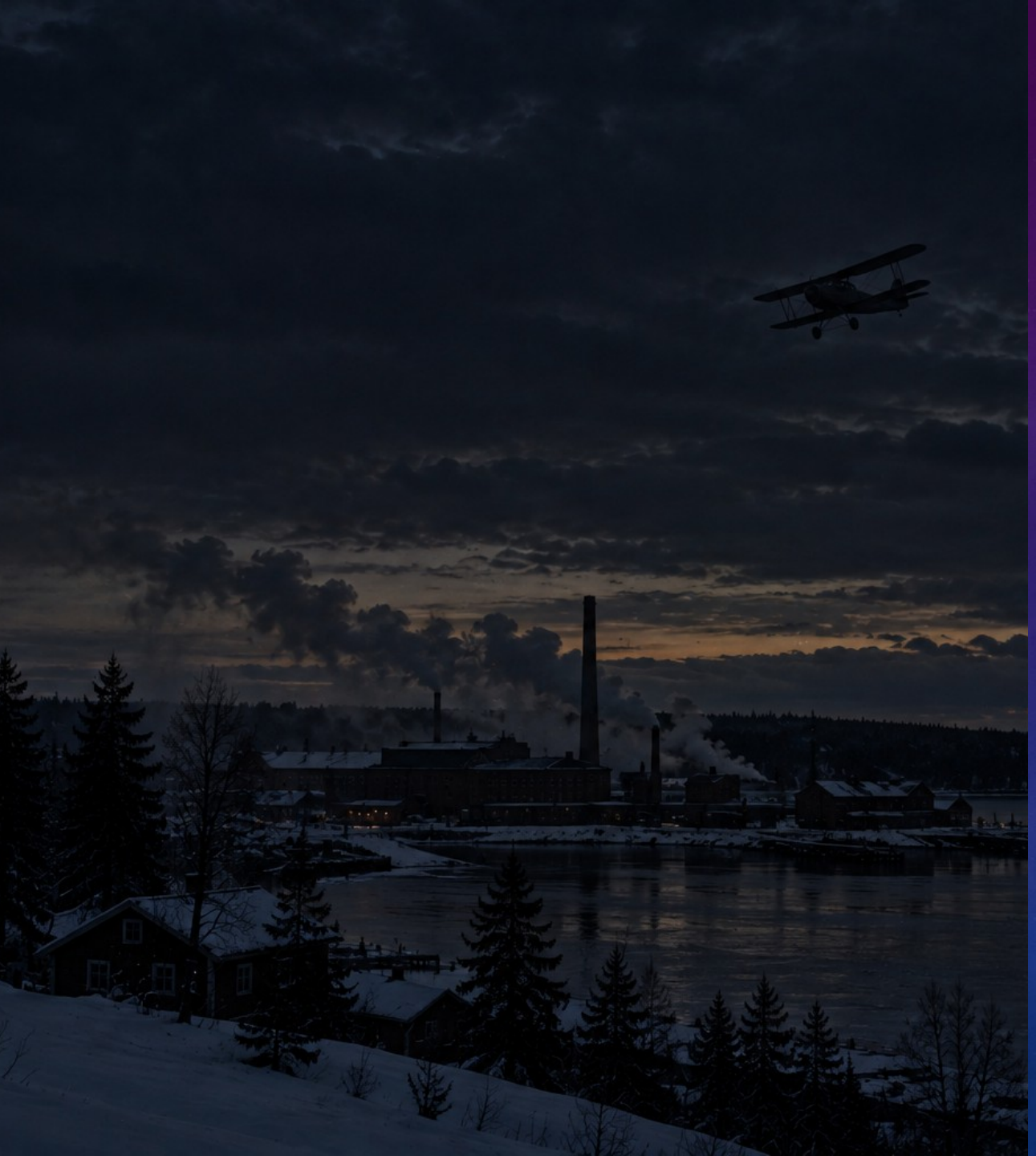
- Norwegian authorities were aware of the “ghost flyer” reports.
- By December 1936, the reports were being followed with interest by military experts both in Norway and abroad.
- An element of Norwegian naval officers reportedly considered the sightings compatible with Soviet aircraft conducting reconnaissance and assisting submarine operations.
- Prime Minister Johan Nygaardsvold denied suggestions that Norway’s increased preparations its north were based on the aircraft reports or rumors of submarine activity.
- The government stated that its preparations were driven by the strategic isolation and logistical vulnerability of northern Norway.
- The Norwegian record therefore shows military interest in the reports, but no official Norwegian conclusion identifying the aircraft.



SWEDISH MILITARY ASSESSMENT 1937

- Around the turn of 1936–1937, Swedish military authorities reported observations of lights, sounds, and aircraft in Norrbotten.
- On 9 February 1937, the commander of Upper Norrland , Major General Carl Pehr Pontus Reuterswärd stated that foreign aviation over the military district could be regarded as established.
- The General Staff stated that the reports, together with observations from Norway, indicated unauthorized aviation during late 1936 and early 1937.
- Special searchlight equipment, listening equipment, and personnel were deployed to investigate further.
- The surveillance effort produced no confirmed observation of a foreign aircraft.
- Reports declined sharply after the surveillance began and then ceased.

THE CASES 1937



CASE #5: BYSKE, SWEDEN, LATE 1936

- Two brothers working in Byske reported a biplane approaching from the sea.
- It crossed over the Byske pulp mill, turned, and returned toward the sea.
- They reported no engine sound and no lights.
- No other observers reportedly saw the object despite others being outdoors.
- Both men maintained during police and military questioning that they had seen an aircraft.
- A Boden military commission, including Fanjunkare Knut Gunnerfeldt, investigated.
- One brother later reportedly acknowledged that the object could have been a sea eagle.



CASE #6: BODEN, SWEDEN, EARLY FEBRUARY 1937

- A Swedish Army major, captain, fanjunkare, two fortress police officers and a police officer reported a moving light over Boden fortress.
- All six also reported engine noise.
- The episode occurred during a broader recurrence of reports over northern Sweden.
- In January 1934, there was a ghost flyer sighting over the fortress, that had prompted military surveillance, and which transformed this latest sighting into a military concern again.
- Ambulance pilot Fanjunkare Knut Gunnerfeldt reconstructed the reported flight with an aircraft.
- The military observers remained convinced that their original observations were correct.
- The identities of the six observers and the exact time of the observation remain unidentified.



SWEDISH SURVEILLANCE 1937

- Swedish authorities responded to the renewed reports with intensified surveillance.
- Searchlights, listening equipment, and specially trained personnel were deployed.
- The surveillance produced no confirmed observation of a foreign aircraft.
- The number of reports declined soon after the measures were introduced.
- The government did not conduct a separate comprehensive re-investigation of the 1936–1937 reports.
- The evidence therefore supports renewed military concern, but not identification of the aircraft.
- The government explicitly reported the negative surveillance result.

THE ENDURING MYSTERY

- If these were conventional aircraft, who was operating them—and why?
- If they were conventional aircraft, why did the 1933–1934 investigation fail to identify an operator?
- If the 1936–1937 reports represented the same phenomenon, why did it recur after a relative lull?
- If they were not conventional aircraft, why did witnesses describe them in the technological language of their own time?