UAP AND THE KOREAN WAR

CHRIS HUSING © NOVEMBER 2026



WHO AM I?

- Former Department of the Air Force civilian historian assigned to HQ Air Force Reserve, Robins AFB, and HQ Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles AFB (1995–1998).
- Received a classified briefing on a UAP incident in 1996.
- Interviewed by the Department of Defense’s All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office, 17 May 2023.
- Guest lecturer, “UAP and Homeland Security” course, Farmingdale State College.



THE KOREAN WAR

- 25 June 1950: Forces from the Communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) cross the 38th parallel and invade Western-backed Republic of Korea (ROK).
- 27 June 1950: The UN Security Council recommends that UN member states to provide military assistance to the ROK.
- 12 September 1950: DPRK forces have pushed the ROK and UN forces out of the capital, Seoul (on 28 June) , and into the "Pusan Perimeter" in the southeastern part of the Korean Peninsula.
- 15 September 1950: UN commander General Douglas MacArthur launches a surprise amphibious landing at Inchon with the U.S. X Corps. Seoul is liberated on 28 September.



THE KOREAN WAR

- 25 October 1950: UN forces have routed North Korean forces, captured Pyongyang, the DPRK capital, and are approaching the Yalu River and the border of the People's Republic of China.
- 25 November 1950: Communist Chinese forces, who began covertly entering the DPRK in October, launch a surprise offensive against the UN forces, devastating overextended lead elements. The main body of UN forces retreats southwards.
- 30 November—11 December 1950: U.S. Marine, Army, Royal Marine, and ROK forces escape encirclement by two entire Chinese armies at the Chosin Reservoir.
- 4 January 1951: Communist forces recapture Seoul.



THE KOREAN WAR

- 14 March 1951: UN forces retake Seoul.
- April 1951: Heavily outnumbered UN forces blunt a Chinese advance on Seoul at the Battles of Kapyong and the Imjin River.
- 10 July 1951: Truce talks begin at Kaesong and relocate to Panmunjom in October. Fighting continues, but the front line changes little.
- 27 July 1953: The United Nations Command, Korean People's Army, and Chinese People's Volunteers conclude an armistice that ends hostilities. The agreement establishes a demilitarized zone along the military demarcation line.

THE KOREAN WAR & UAP

- The Korean War—particularly in the air—saw a curious mix of proven World War II aircraft and technology alongside that of the emerging Jet Age.
- During World War II, several Royal Air Force and U.S. Army Air Forces squadrons encountered Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) that became known as “foo fighters.”
- During the Korean War, the U.S. military reported similar and distinct UAP across a wider range of units and operational environments.
- Despite a very thorough search, the only unexplained UAP encounter involving non–U.S. forces that we could document were from two Australian aviators. That is not to say that there were not *any* other UN or Communist forces that had such encounters. For any number of possible reasons, those reports are not available.
- During the war, U.S. personnel made several dozen reports of UAP encounters. This presentation focuses on the cases that we judged most anomalous among those documented in military records or credible press accounts.

U.S. MILITARY INVESTIGATIONS OF UAP SIGHTINGS

- From October 1951 to March 1952, the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) at Wright-Patterson AFB investigated UFO reports under the reactivated Project Grudge. Its wartime files included the two B-29 sightings near Wonsan and Sunchon on 29 January 1952.
- On 5 March 1952, Far East Air Forces (FEAF) issued instructions for reporting unidentified flying objects. FEAF intelligence, its Air Technical Intelligence Liaison Office (ATILO), and the 6004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron gathered reports and followed up with witnesses in theater.
- In March 1952, Project Blue Book succeeded Grudge and continued ATIC's evaluation of UFO reports during the war. FEAF's theater investigation and ATIC's stateside evaluation were separate steps in the reporting process.
- Navy and Marine Corps units documented unidentified aircraft and radar contacts through operational intelligence channels. FEAF's Intelligence Report IR-29-52 compiled examples from Navy carriers, patrol squadrons, and Marine Air Control Group 2 and forwarded them to ATIC.
- From 14 to 17 January 1953, the CIA-convened Robertson Panel reviewed selected UFO cases and briefings from Grudge and Blue Book. It was a broader scientific review of the Air Force program, separate from the Korean theater investigations.



SEOUL, ROK 30 SEPTEMBER 1950

- On 30 September 1950, at 1237, a U.S. Marine Corps military police patrol observed an unidentified disc-shaped object over northwest Seoul.
- Witnesses included First Lieutenant Eugene J. Ambrosia, Staff Sergeant Robert J. Bowden, and Sergeant Franklin Ryerson, assigned to the Military Police Company, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division.
- The object traveled east to west in broad daylight and remained visible for approximately two to three minutes.
- Ambrosia described the object as silvery, while Bowden described it as yellowish.
- Ambrosia estimated that the object was flying at approximately bomber altitude and moving two to three times faster than aircraft he had observed over Korea. Neither its altitude nor its speed was independently measured.
- The Marines reported the sighting to Major William C. Esterline, intelligence officer (S-2), 5th Marine Regiment, who indicated that the report would be forwarded to division intelligence.
- The witnesses were identified in contemporary newspaper reporting. The original military intelligence report has not been located.



WONSAN/ SUNCHON, DPRK 29/30 JANUARY 1952

- On 29 January 1952, at 2300, three gunners aboard a United States Air Force B-29 Superfortress observed a luminous orange object approximately 30 miles west-southwest of Wonsan.
- The B-29 was flying at 22,500 feet when the object appeared alongside it, maintaining a roughly parallel course for five minutes.
- Witnesses described a globe-shaped object with a fuzzy outline, occasional bluish tint, and internal movement resembling flames or churning gases.



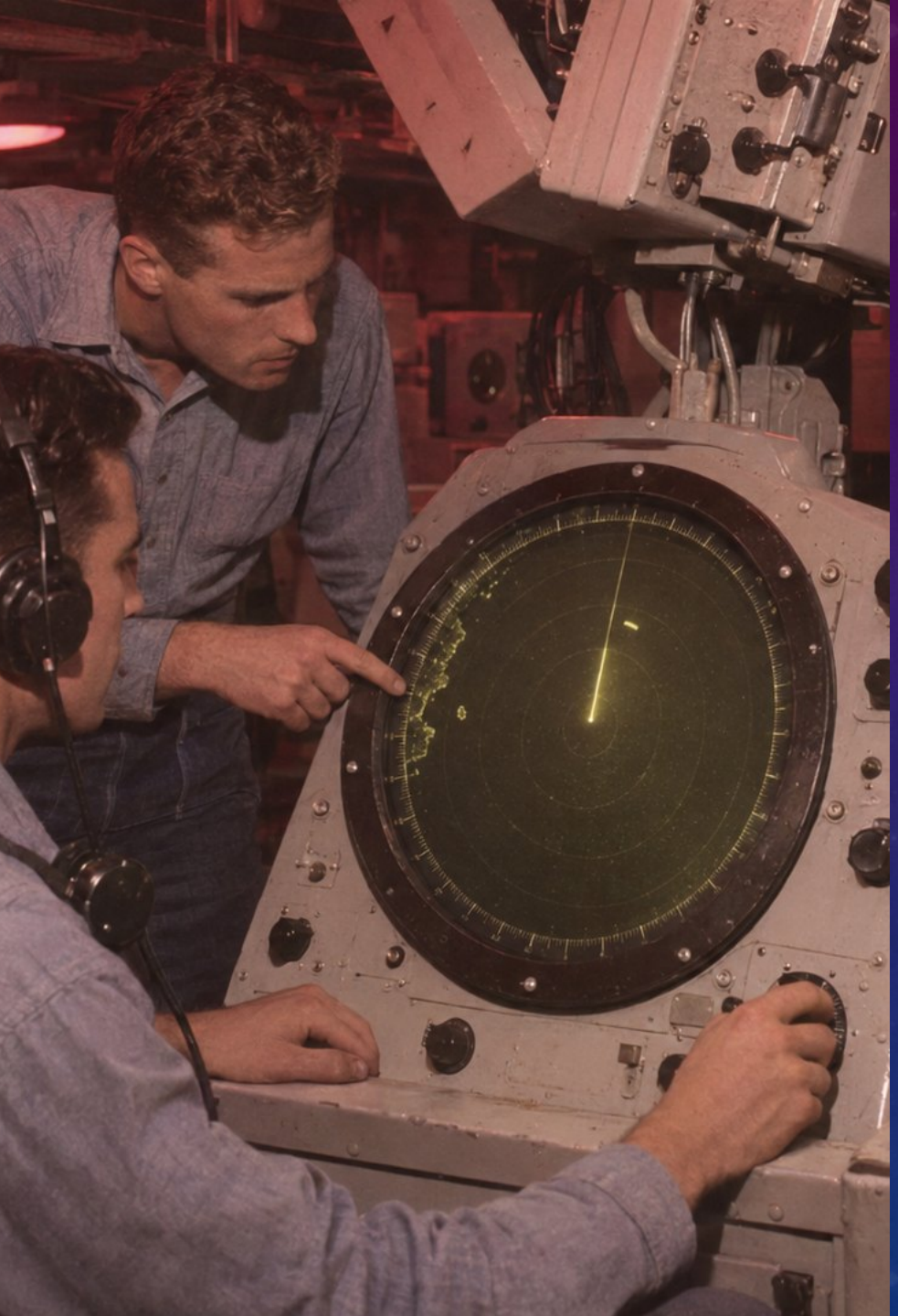
WONSAN/ SUNCHON, DPRK 29/30 JANUARY 1952

- At 2324, the left and tail gunners aboard another B-29, operating from a different squadron near Sunchon, observed a similar object for approximately one minute.
- Air Force intelligence officers interviewed the two crews separately. The witnesses were experienced combat veterans of World War II and Korea.
- Air Technical Intelligence Center investigators examined possible propulsion systems and compared the sightings with World War II Foo Fighter reports. They reached no definitive identification.
- On 21 February 1952, Senator Richard B. Russell requested an official evaluation from Secretary of the Air Force Thomas K. Finletter. On 5 March, General Nathan F. Twining, Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, submitted a memorandum considering Soviet fighter exhaust or airborne searchlights as tentative explanations.
- On 8 March, Secretary Finletter forwarded the Air Force evaluation to Senator Russell. Neither proposed explanation had been confirmed.



USS *PHILIPPINE SEA* 2 FEBRUARY 1952

- On 2 February 1952, radar operators aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Philippine Sea* (CV-47) off the east coast of North Korea in the Sea of Japan detected an unidentified aerial target approaching from the north at approximately 25 miles.
- The target closed to 20 miles before making a wide turn eastward and moving away from the carrier.
- Three signal bridge observers independently reported seeing what appeared to be three aircraft exhaust flames in the same direction as the radar contact.
- The ship's SPS-6B radar tracked the target as it accelerated from approximately 600 to 900 and then 1,800 miles per hour over three consecutive minutes.



USS *PHILIPPINE SEA* 2 FEBRUARY 1952

- At approximately 50 miles, the radar contact separated into two returns, spaced 5–12 miles apart. Both disappeared from radar at approximately 110 miles.
- The commanding officer's report of 11 February stated that radar interference would ordinarily have been considered, but the simultaneous visual observation raised doubts about that explanation.
- On 8 April, Commander Naval Forces Far East forwarded the report to the Chief of Naval Operations. On 31 May, the Director of Naval Intelligence forwarded it to the Air Technical Intelligence Center for possible further evaluation.
- Naval Intelligence suggested that the radar and visual observations might have coincided by chance. No definitive identification was established.



SINUIJU, DPRK/ ANTUNG, PRC 23/24 FEBRUARY 1952

- On 24 February 1952, at 2315, the navigator of a United States Air Force B-29 Superfortress observed an unidentified aerial object near Antung, Manchuria, across the Yalu River from Sinuiju, North Korea.
- Approximately 45 seconds before the sighting, enemy searchlights illuminated the B-29, which was flying at 22,000 feet and approximately 200 knots.
- The navigator described a bluish, cylindrical object with a rapidly pulsating exhaust trail approximately three times the object's length.
- The object appeared to climb at a 45-degree angle, level off approximately 4,000 feet from the bomber, and turn toward it on an apparent interception course.
- After approaching for approximately 15 seconds, the object descended beneath the B-29. The navigator estimated its closest distance at 3,000 feet.



SINUIJU, DPRK/ ANTUNG, PRC 23/24 FEBRUARY 1952

- Enemy searchlights remained on the bomber for approximately four minutes. The aircraft encountered inaccurate antiaircraft fire, and its electronic countermeasures operator detected weak electronic signals.
- Air Technical Intelligence Center investigators considered a possible surface-to-air guided missile and referred the report to their guided-missile specialists.
- No evidence has been established that North Korean, Chinese, or Soviet forces employed operational surface-to-air guided missiles during the Korean War.
- Contemporary records contain a discrepancy between 23 and 24 February. Project Grudge's official account identifies the sighting as 24 February. No definitive identification was established.



NORTH KOREA 15 MAY 1952

- On 15 May 1952, at 1835, Captain R. Dye of the United States Air Force's 18th Fighter-Bomber Group observed an unidentified silver object while returning from a combat mission in an F-51 Mustang.
- Captain Dye was flying at approximately 9,000 feet and 240 miles per hour when he first observed the object at his one o'clock position.
- He estimated the object's diameter at approximately 50 feet and its speed at 1,000 miles per hour.
- The object traveled horizontally before making a steep climb. It then resumed forward movement, wavered briefly, and descended into haze approximately 7,000–8,000 feet above the ground.



NORTH KOREA 15 MAY 1952

- Captain Dye attempted to report the object to his flight, but his radio transmission was too weak for the other pilots to hear.
- Another pilot independently observed the object. The two witnesses discovered their shared observation only after landing.
- Captain Vincent A. Goskey investigated the incident for Air Force intelligence. His report included Captain Dye's statement and a sketch of the object's flight path.
- The sighting lasted approximately 15–25 seconds.



NORTH KOREA
26 MAY 1952

- On 26 May 1952, at approximately 0320, a United States Air Force F-94 Starfire of the 319th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron encountered unidentified aerial activity over North Korea.
- The crew consisted of First Lieutenant John W. Martin, pilot, and First Lieutenant Edward A. Monard, radar observer.
- Ground-controlled interception personnel directed the F-94 toward an unidentified radar contact.
- In a separate entry timed 0323, Fifth Air Force recorded that an F-94 crew made several passes near a brilliant light. The crew could see no outline around it.
- A Project Blue Book summary also describes a brilliant white light during the radar intercept. The records leave it unclear whether this was the same light described in the 0323 entry.



NORTH KOREA 26 MAY 1952

- In its 0320 entry, Fifth Air Force reported that the F-94 acquired a radar contact at approximately 7,000 yards and closed to 6,000 yards. The crew used afterburner during the pursuit.
- According to the same entry, the radar range then increased to 26,000 yards in 14 seconds. Fifth Air Force intelligence estimated a speed of approximately 3,000 miles per hour if the reported movement was accurate.
- The crew's observations also included an unidentified aircraft illuminated by searchlights. The available records do not establish that the visual light, illuminated aircraft, and rapidly departing radar contact were the same object.
- The aircraft's radar equipment reportedly functioned normally during checks, although Air Force investigators considered possible radar malfunction. Enemy balloons carrying lights were another potential explanation.
- The Air Force recorded the incident in its intelligence files, but the relationship between the separate visual and radar observations remained unresolved.



CHORWON, ROK 31 MAY 1952

- On 31 May 1952, at approximately 0345, United States Air Force personnel at an aircraft control and warning installation south of Chorwon observed a brilliant white object maneuvering in the predawn sky.
- Airman First Class Gaillard Burchett reported that the object descended, stopped, climbed, reversed direction, and accelerated away. Another guard independently reported a luminous object and a pulsating sound.
- At approximately 0350, a United States Air Force F-94 Starfire of the 319th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron attempted to intercept a brilliant bluish-white object in the same general area.
- According to the fighter crew, the object climbed toward their aircraft and maneuvered during repeated interception attempts. The F-94 used its afterburner but could not gain a favorable position behind it.
- The crew reported that the object matched the fighter's turns and demonstrated superior climbing performance before accelerating away.



CHORWON, ROK 31 MAY 1952

- The fighter crew reported airborne radar contact during the encounter. Ground radar did not detect the object.
- Far East Air Forces intelligence officers believed the ground and airborne sightings might be related but noted differences between the witnesses' descriptions of the object's maneuvers.
- Investigators considered a balloon carrying a light or a conventional aircraft equipped with a powerful searchlight. Project Blue Book ultimately classified the principal Chorwon case as unknown.



KIMPO AIR BASE, ROK 6 JUNE 1952

- On 6 June 1952, at 0842, Flight Sergeant Kenneth Dudley Smith of No. 77 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, observed an unidentified disc-shaped object over Kimpo Air Base (K-14).
- Smith, a combat pilot with 122 missions, initially mistook the object for a bird or piece of paper before noticing that it appeared metallic.
- He described a dull silver disc, approximately seven times wider than it was thick, with dark blue edges and concentric dark markings on its surface.
- Smith estimated the object's diameter at 50–60 feet and its speed at approximately 300 knots. He compared its apparent size and movement with those of two F-86 Sabres approaching the airfield.
- The object reportedly rotated clockwise, tumbled end over end, stopped momentarily, and climbed vertically before changing direction toward the east.



KIMPO AIR BASE, ROK 6 JUNE 1952

- Smith estimated that the object climbed to 35,000–40,000 feet before continuing its unusual movements and disappearing toward the sun.
- Shortly afterward, Smith observed the object moving back and forth near the sun. Flight Sergeant Kenneth Fawner, also of No. 77 Squadron, independently observed the object during this final sighting, which lasted approximately 30 seconds.
- The initial observation lasted approximately four minutes. Smith provided a signed statement and sketches of the object's appearance and movements.
- United States Air Force intelligence investigated the sighting but obtained no radar or photographic confirmation. Project Blue Book classified the case as unidentified.



WEST-CENTRAL KOREA 20 JUNE 1952

- On 20 June 1952, at 1503, five United States Marine Corps F4U-4B Corsairs of Marine Fighter Squadron 212 were conducting a close air support mission over west-central Korea.
- According to Air Intelligence Information Report No. 30-52, four of the five pilots observed a white or silver oval object approximately 10–20 feet in diameter.
- The report placed the Corsairs at approximately 5,300 feet. The object was estimated to be two miles away at an altitude of approximately 1,000 feet.
- The object approached from the south, made a left-hand orbit over grid CT 091129, and departed eastward.
- One Marine pilot reportedly attempted to pursue the object in a dive but was unable to overtake it.
- The object disappeared near grid CT 120118 at 1504. Its speed was estimated at approximately 1,000 miles per hour.
- No exhaust or vapor trail was observed, and no shadow was reported on the ground.
- The object's estimated dimensions, distance, altitude, and speed were based on visual observations rather than instrument measurements.



K-6 AIR BASE, PYEONGTAEK, ROK 22 JUNE 1952

- On 22 June 1952, at 2245, two United States Marine Corps sergeants working in a squadron operations office observed an orange object approximately four feet in diameter above K-6 Air Base.
- The object approached from the north at an estimated altitude of 800 feet.
- It descended almost vertically, leveling off approximately 100 feet above the western end of the runway.
- During its descent, the object reportedly emitted a bright red flame extending two to five feet behind it.
- It traveled approximately one-quarter mile westward and appeared to hover briefly over nearby hills.
- The object then executed a 180-degree right turn lasting approximately 45–60 seconds.



K-6 AIR BASE, PYEONGTAEK, ROK 22 JUNE 1952

- Following the turn, it emitted a bright flash and traveled approximately one-half mile eastward.
- A second flash occurred before the object disappeared from view.
- Neither witness reported hearing any sound throughout the encounter.
- The investigating intelligence officer interviewed the witnesses individually and together and considered their observations credible.
- Project Blue Book classified the sighting as unidentified.
- The witnesses' names and exact squadron assignment remain unverified in the available documentation.



BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL 14 AUGUST 1952

- On the morning of 14 August 1952, a United States Marine Corps infantry patrol operating several miles east of Bunker Hill, inside enemy-held territory, reported observing an unidentified aerial object.
- The patrol belonged to the 1st Marine Division and was commanded by Second Lieutenant Paul D. Mahoney.
- The Marines described the object as circular, exceptionally thin, light-colored, and not particularly reflective.
- The object appeared east of the Moon at an estimated altitude of 10,000 feet.
- According to the witnesses, it remained nearly stationary for several minutes before abruptly changing direction.



BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL 14 AUGUST 1952

- The object reportedly made another sharp directional change before disappearing from view.
- Every member of the patrol except one reported witnessing the object.
- The sighting was reported by United Press on 15 August 1952, providing contemporary documentation.
- No surviving official Marine Corps intelligence report has been located.



OFF HUNGNAM, DPRK 12 OCTOBER 1952

- On 12 October 1952, at approximately 2100, Major W. E. Carr and Chief Warrant Officer L. D. Young of the United States Marine Corps were flying an F7F Tigercat on an escort mission over the Sea of Japan, off Hungnam, North Korea.
- The aircraft was flying at approximately 8,000 feet and 160 knots when Young observed a reddish-orange ball of light at the aircraft's four o'clock position.
- Young alerted Carr, who turned the aircraft toward the object and increased speed to approximately 220 knots in an attempted interception.
- Both Marines observed the light, but neither could identify a conventional aircraft structure, exhaust trail, or other aerodynamic features.
- The object was subsequently observed approximately eight to ten miles away, apparently traveling at twice the speed of the F7F.
- The light appeared to descend and fade toward the north. The observation lasted approximately five minutes.



OFF HUNGNAM, DPRK 12 OCTOBER 1952

- Young attempted to obtain an airborne radar contact but was unsuccessful.
- The witnesses reported clear weather and excellent visibility. Both were experienced combat aviators.
- The investigating officer noted that the object's estimated distance, altitude, and speed were uncertain because reliable reference points were unavailable.
- Investigators considered the possibility of a conventional jet aircraft's exhaust glow. Project Blue Book classified the sighting as Probably Balloon.
- The case remains noteworthy for its two military witnesses and contemporary documentation, although its identification and reported performance were not independently confirmed.

KOREAN WAR RADAR-ONLY ENCOUNTERS

- During the Korean War, United States Navy patrol aircraft and naval vessels reported numerous unidentified radar contacts in the waters surrounding Korea.
- Reports included contacts detected by airborne search radar aboard maritime patrol aircraft and by surface-search radar aboard warships.
- Some operators reported unusually high speeds, abrupt changes in direction, or targets appearing and disappearing unexpectedly.
- However, radar returns alone could not establish an object's physical appearance, dimensions, altitude, or identity.
- Early-1950s radar systems were susceptible to anomalous propagation, atmospheric ducting, sea clutter, interference, and other sources of misleading returns.

KOREAN WAR RADAR-ONLY ENCOUNTERS

- Radar-derived speeds could also be exaggerated when successive returns were incorrectly associated with the same target.
- Although some reports involved multiple radar contacts, these did not necessarily represent independent confirmation of a single physical object.
- The absence of simultaneous visual observations prevented investigators from establishing whether the contacts represented unusual aircraft, natural phenomena, or radar artifacts.
- We therefore excluded radar-only encounters unless independent evidence established that the contacts represented genuinely anomalous objects.
- These exclusions do not establish that every radar contact was erroneous; they reflect the limitations of the surviving evidence and our research standards.

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